# the BIG BOPPER

ALAN CLARK

1930—1959

## Chantilly Lace

NUMBER THREE

30TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERIES

30TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL SERIES

# THE BIG BOPPER

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF J. P. "BIG BOPPER" RICHARDSON.

THIS BOOKLET IS DEDICATED TO THE RICHARDSON FAMILY AND THE MANY FAITHFUL FANS OF J. P. "BIG BOPPER" RICHARDSON.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING:

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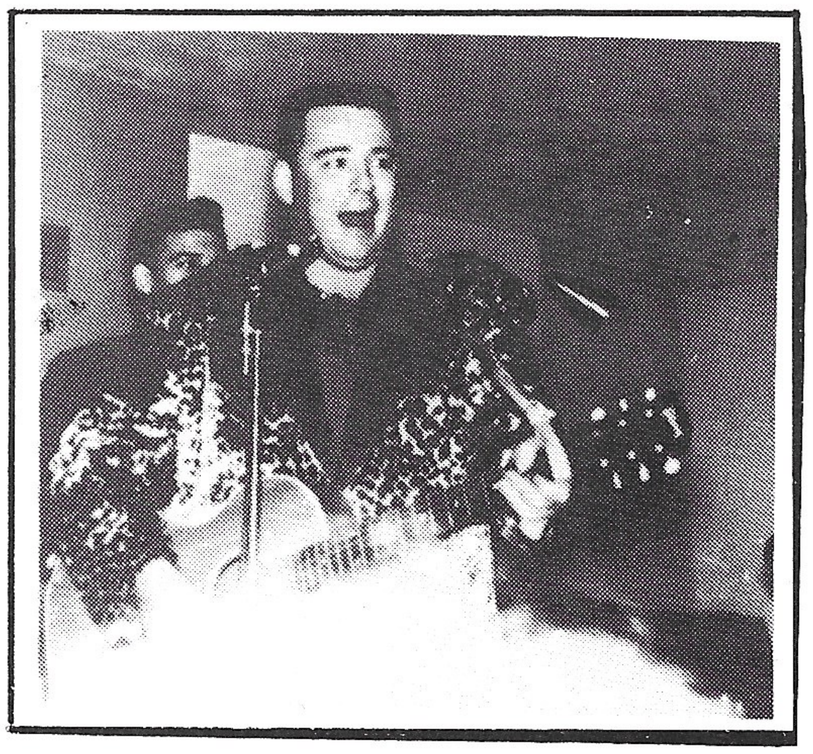

PHOTO BILL GRIGGS

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COMPILED AND DESIGNED BY ALAN CLARK

Chantilly Lace

THE NATIONAL ROCK 'N ROLL ARCHIVES

# THE BIG BOPPER

by Randall C. Hill

Jiles Perry Richardson first saw life on October 24,1930, in Sabine Pass, Texas. Jiles was the oldest of three sons of an oilfield worker. The family soon moved to Beaumont. Richardson hated his first name and took on the monicker Jape. He graduated in 1947 from Beaumont High School and was a member of the *"Royal Purple"* Football team. He later earned a Diploma from the Lamar College of Technology. Richardson's college major was Radio and Television Broadcasting. During his college years, He worked part time on local radio.

On April 14, 1952, Jape married Adrianne Joy Fryon. They had a daughter which they named Debra. Adrianne was pregnant when Richardson lost his life in the tragic plane crash in 1959.

In the early 1950's Jape traveled to Louisiana to record a song called *"Boogie Woogie"* He recorded it at the Jay D. Miller Studios. The tune appeared on an import LP in the 1980's entitled *"Oh Baby That's What I Like"* on the Star label.

He joined the army in 1955, spending two years as a radar instructor at Ft. Bliss. After his discharge, Jape found his way to Beaumont's KTRM radio, where he first worked the *"Dishwasher's Serenade"* from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. each weekday. With his deep, booming voice, Richardson quickly became so popular that he earned a better time slot with *"The Big Bopper Show"* from 3 - 6 p.m. In time, he was named the station's program director as well.

Jape established a world's record for continous broadcasting in May of 1957. During his highly touted *"Discathon,"* Richardson spun 1,821 records. He spent six sleepless days fueled by a sparse high sugar, starch and protein diet. Ten times a day, he took a cold shower during the station's five-minute newscasts.Jape was shaved at the mike by a local barber. The ordeal sapped 35 pounds from his 240-pound frame. Richardson's overtime work earned him an additional $746.50 from KTRM. After awakening from a twenty-hour slumber, he candidly stated, "I wouldn't do it again for anything."

Besides his deejay chores, Jape also began songwriting. He composed *"Running Bear"* for his Port Arthur buddy Johnny Preston. Part of the song's lyrics ("Running Bear loved Little White Dove") were inspired by a Dove soap TV commercial. Preston's waxing (featuring Richardson doing the Indian war cry) would find its way to Number One on the 1959 pop charts. Jape also wrote *"White Lightning"* for George Jones; it became Jone's first Number One country hit (it reached 73 on the pop lists).

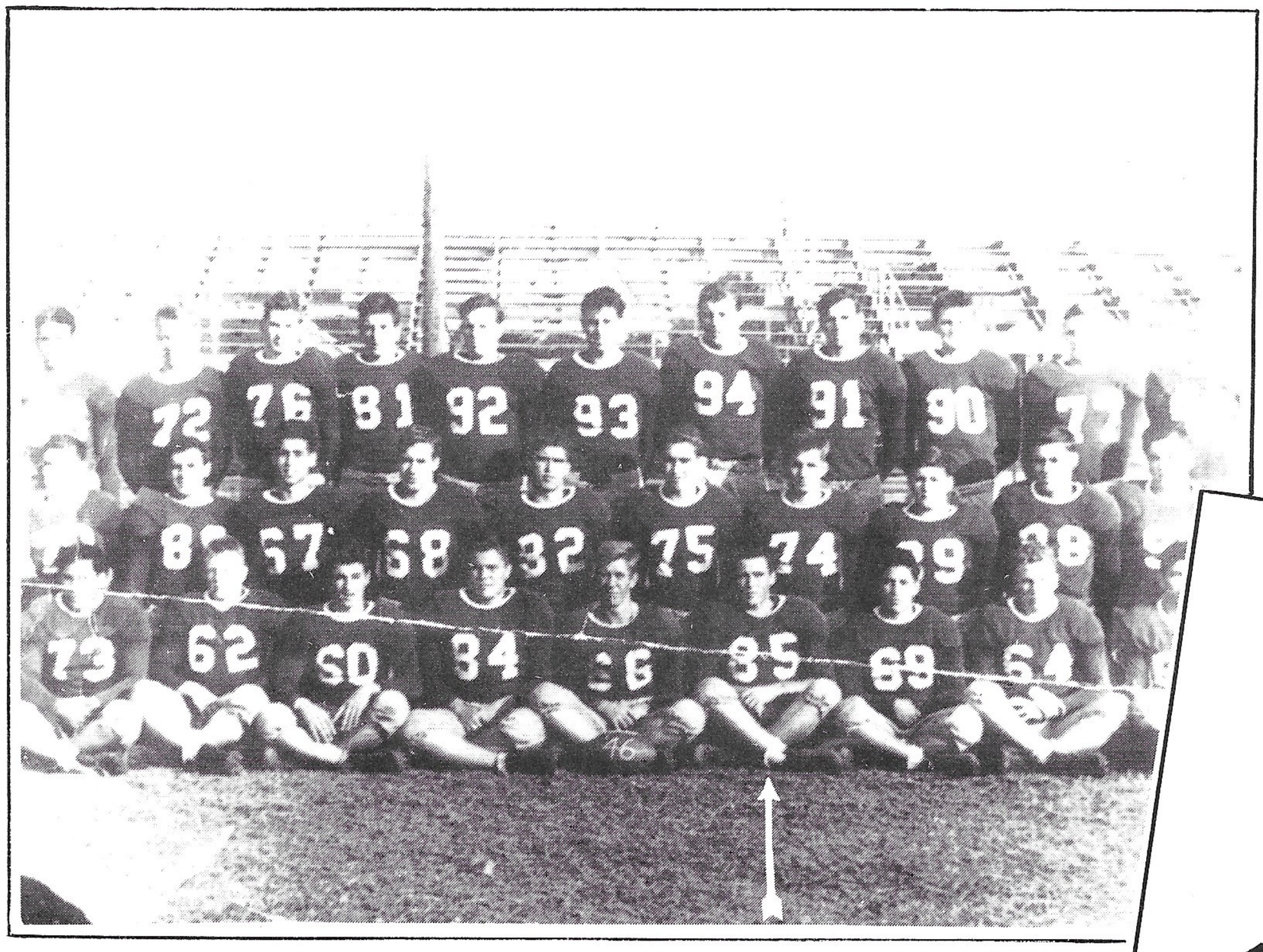
Before long, Jape was cutting demo records and mailing them to Harold *"Pappy"* Dailey in Houston. (He ran Mercury-Starday Records there.) Dailey signed Jape to Mercury as a Songwriter/Recording artist. Jape Richardson's first two singles -- more country than rock -- sold poorly.

He then cut *"Chantilly Lace"* on the miniscule D label in Dallas. The song was so cheaply recorded that jingle bells were used in place of a ringing telephone. Mercury issued the good - time disc in late summer of 1958.*"Chantilly Lace"* became the third most played record in America that year and worked its way to Number Six on the charts. Three weeks before Christmas came *"Big Bopper's Wedding,"* which barely cracked the Top Forty the following January.

Due to the success of *"Chantilly Lace,"* Jape often took brief leaves of absence from KTRM for tours. It was the Winter Dance Party tour in the winter of 1959, of course, that would catapult the Big Bopper into rock-and-roll immortality.

On February 2,1959, Buddy Holly chartered a Beechcraft Bonanza to transport him and his "new" Crickets band (Tommy Allsup and Waylon Jennings) to Fargo, North Dakota, Jape Richardson had contracted the flu and, because of his bulk, couldn't rest well on the cramped bus. "Those bus seats bug me," Richardson groused to Waylon Jennings. Waylon acquiesced to the big man and gave up his seat on the plane. Valens had never flown in a small aircraft before and requested Tommy Allsup's seat. They agreed on a coin toss and Valens, who had called "heads" won the seat and lost his life.

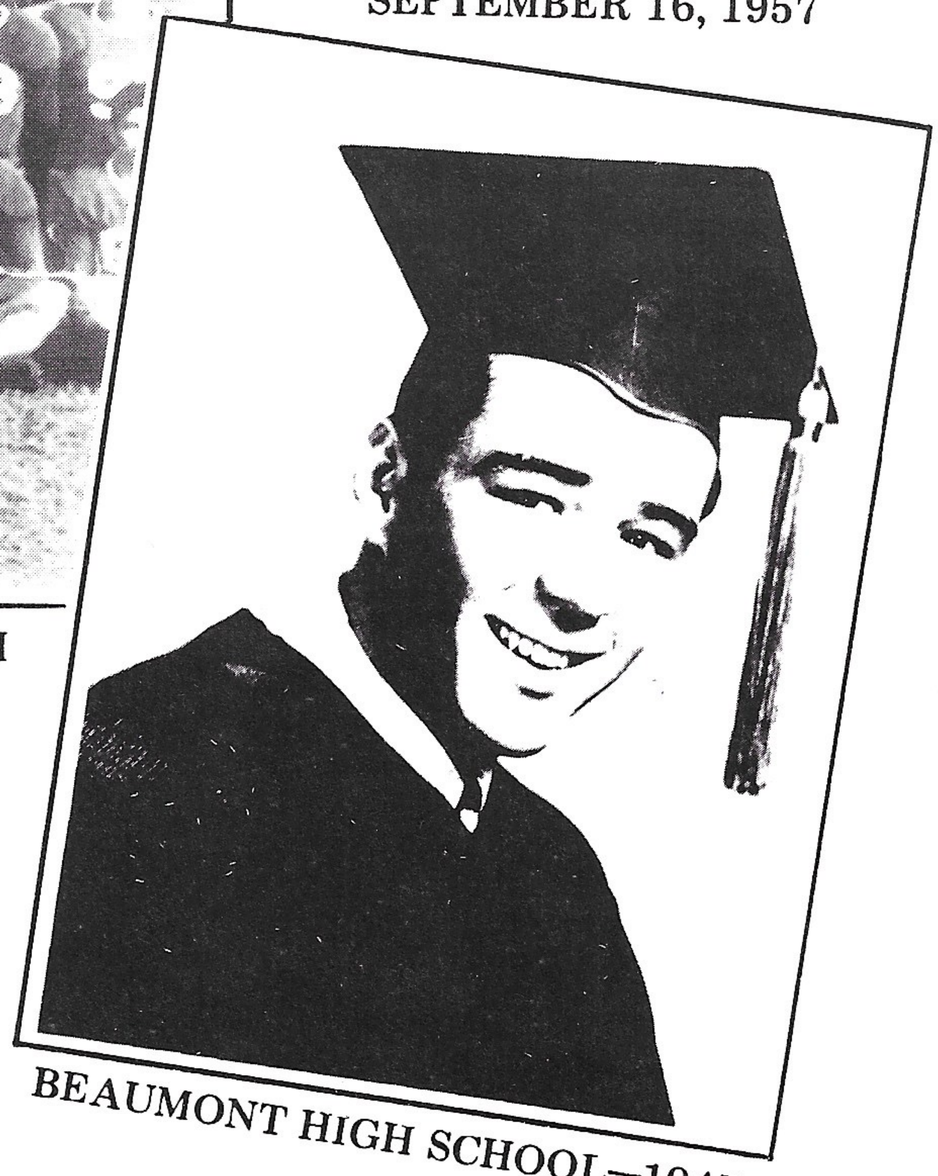
At the Big Bopper's funeral, a Life photographer attempted to pose three girls wailing and prostrate over the coffin. The cameraman was bodily ejected from the Church. Jiles Perry Richardson 28 at the time of his death, left a wife, a daughter, and a son--born later in 1959--whom he would never live to see.



THE "ROYAL PURPLE" FOOTBALL TEAM—BEAUMONT HIGH

Newest artist to be spotted by **William G. Hall,** vet talent manager of Beaumont, Tex., is **J. P. (Jape) Richardson,** KTRM d.j. there. Richardson has written songs recorded on the Starday, Feature and Hickory labels and was recently signed to a writer-recording pact by **H. W. (Pappy) Daily,** first release on Mercury-Starday to be "A Beggar to a King" and "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." Richardson is currently at the Royal Palm nitery in Beaumont, heading his Japathons band.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1957



BEAUMONT HIGH SCHOOL—1947

**JAPE RICHARDSON**

MERCURY 71219—A country styled three-beater with a very poppish treatment by the chanter and a full choral sound. Message has its profound spots which could affect some buyers. Action possible with exposure. **(Starrite, BMI)**

**Crazy Blues ....69**

Richardson has a refined rockabilly sound on this medium blues. Nice delivery with easy-going backing has an agreeable sound with but moderate strength. **(Starrite, BMI)**

NOVEMBER 4, 1957

**JAPE RICHARDSON**

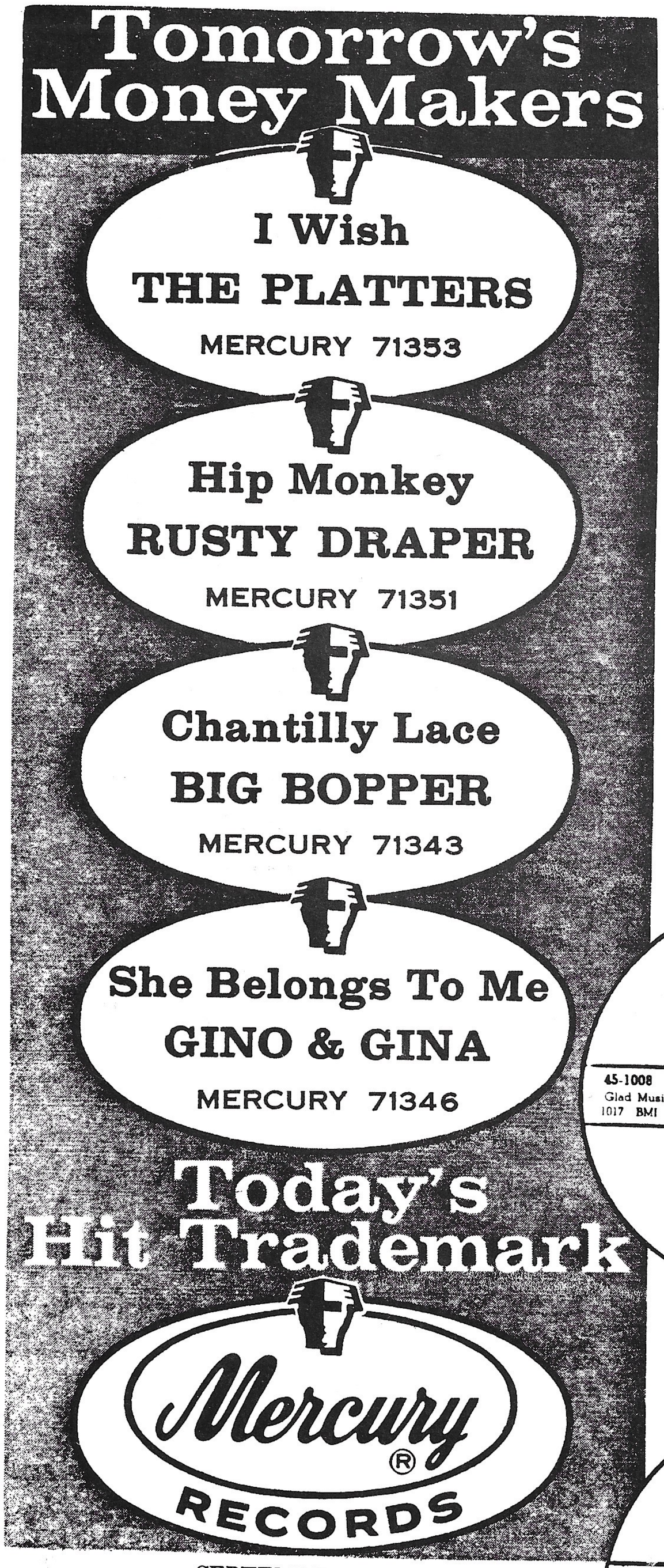
**A Teen-Age Moon .....70**

MERCURY 21312 — A good idea somehow is allowed to go astray here. Fair, soft-pedalled vocal by Richardson in a country styled vein. **(Starrite, BMI)**

**Monkey Song....70**

Richardson gets on a hiccupy, rockabilly kick on this medium beat side. She made a monkey out of him, so now he wants to swing by his tail. Fair chanes. **(Starrite, BMI**

MAY 12, 1958




SEPTEMBER 1, 1958

LONNY STARR
WNEW—New York, N. Y.

1. Chantilly Lace (B. Bopper)
2. Fibbin' (P. Page)
3. White Bucks & Saddle Shoes (B. Pedrick, Jr.)
4. Walking Along (Diamonds)
5. There Goes My Heart (J. James)
6. Paris (P. Prado)
7. Scene Of The Crime (Shore)
8. I'm A Good Boy (E. Arnold)
9. Love Is All We Need (J. Breedlove)
10. Mardi Gras March (S. Oliver)

JOE BRANNON
WEYE—Sanford, N. C.

1. Chantilly Lace (B. Bopper)
2. Queen Of The Hop (B. Darin)
3. How The Time Flies (J. Wallace)
4. Rockin' Robin (B. Day)
5. Baby Face (L. Richard)
6. Carol (C. Berry)
7. Getting Dizzy (Elegants)
8. Green Mosquito (Tune Rockers)
9. Over And Over (B. Day)
10. Topsy II (C. Cole)

## Jockey Richardson Rides a Winner

Jape Richardson, a disk jockey from Southeast Texas, has hit pay dirt in the recording field as Big Bopper. "Chantilly Lace," his first record as Big Bopper, landed a slot on The Billboard's Hot 100 chart back on August 4 and has been climbing steadily since then.

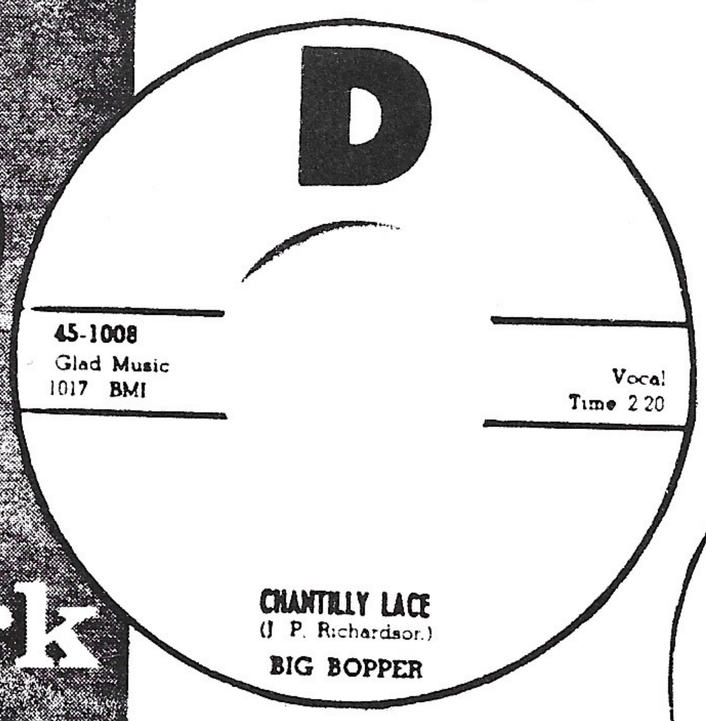
Richardson has been in radio for eight years as a disk jockey and is a writer of numerous compositions which have been recorded by other artists. He also penned his hit tune, "Chantilly Lace" and has recorded two of his own compositions for his next release as Big Bopper on the Mercury label. Recently, Richardson has been making personal appearances and was seen nationally on Dick Clark's Saturday night TV stanza this past September 20.

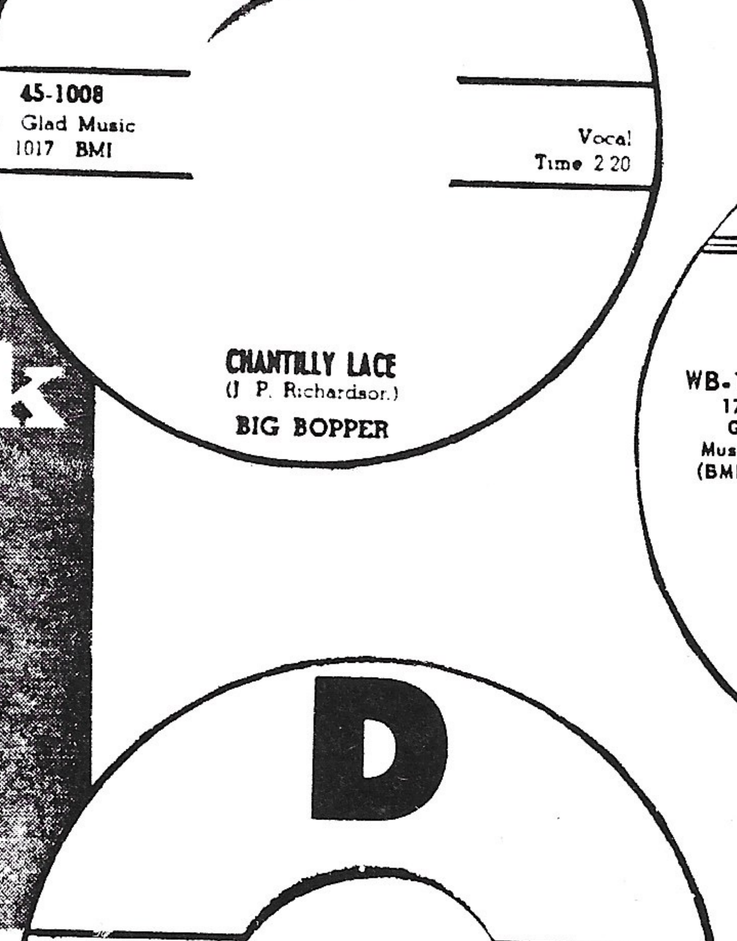
SEPTEMBER—1958

JAPE RICHARDSON
KTRM—Beaumont, Tex.

1. Chantilly Lace (Big Bopper)
2. Splish Splash (B. Darin)
3. Hard Headed Woman (E. Presley)
4. Just A Dream (J. Clanton)
5. My True Love (J. Scott)
6. Cotton Picker (W. Watts)
7. Patricia (P. Prado)
8. Fever (P. Lee)
9. Purple People Eater Meets Witch Doctor (Big Bopper/South)
10. Yakety Yak (Coasters)

JULY 26, 1958



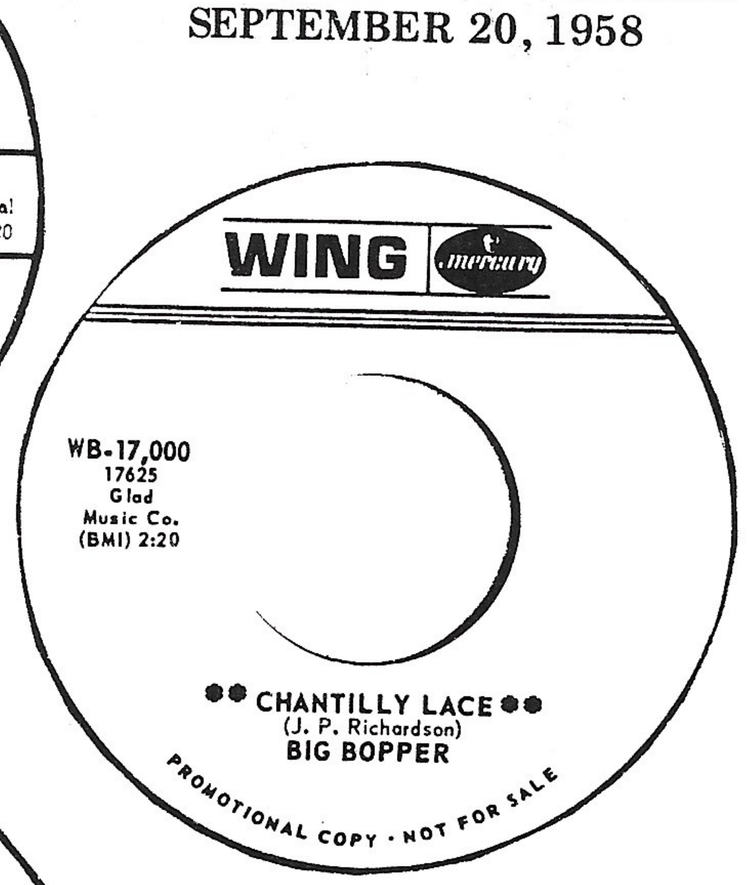

**7 DICK CLARK—Music**

Dick's guests are vocalists Jill Corey, Betty Johnson and Donnie Owens, the Big Boppers, the Shields and the Kalen Twins, vocal groups. (Tape)

**Highlights**

"Big Daddy" ..... Jill Corey
"You Cheated" ..... Shields
"Hoopa Hoola" ..... Johnson
"Chantilly Lace" ..... Boppers
"Need You" ..... Owens
"When" ..... Kalen Twins

SEPTEMBER 20, 1958




TEXAS REPORT: J. P. Richardson, KTRM, Beaumont, Tex. (better known nationally as Mercury's "Big Bopper") has embarked on a tour which will include TV and stage appearances in cities from New Orleans to New York. Richardson, whose waxing "Chantilly Lace" is still a hot seller, will tour thru March.

OCTOBER 27, 1958

CHANTILLY LACE
Words and Music by J. P. RICHARDSON
— as Recorded by —
THE BIG BOPPER
on MERCURY RECORDS
GLAD MUSIC
Sole Selling Agent: PEER INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION, 1619 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.

14 208
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
CHANTILLY LACE
Mercury RECORDS
chanté par
BIG BOPPER

CUSTOM
Mercury
RECORDS
HIGH FIDELITY
Big Bopper
Chantilly Lace

# SOLID SELLING HITS

Walking Along
THE DIAMONDS
71366

FLAMINGO
L'Amore
THE GAYLORDS
71369

Chantilly Lace
BIG BOPPER
71343

Mercury® RECORDS

Prisoner Of Love
BILLY ECKSTINE
71372

TODAY'S HIT TRADEMARK


## OCTOBER 27, 1958

### Kansas City, Mo.

1. Chantilly Lace (B. Bopper)
2. It's All In The Game (T. Edwards)
3. Topsy II (C. Cole)
4. It's Only Make Believe (C. Twitty)
5. Tea For Two Cha Cha (W. Covington)
6. Summertime Blues (Cochran)
7. Rockin' Robin (B. Day)
8. You Cheated (Shields)
9. Tom Dooley (Kingston Trio)
10. Pussy Cat (Ames Bros.)

### HAPPY WILSON
WJAZ—Albany, Ga.

1. Chantilly Lace (B. Bopper)
2. Love Me (Butler & Impressions)
3. Bird Dog (Everlys)
4. Carol (C. Berry)
5. My True Love (J. Scott)
6. Rockin' Robin (B. Day)
7. Susie Darlin' (R. Luke)
8. Tears On My Pillow (Anthony & Imperials)
9. Are You Really Mine (J. Rodgers)
10. It's All In The Game (T. Edwards)

### DAY SANDSTROEM
WWRI—West Warwick, R. I.

1. Chantilly Lace (B. Bopper)
2. Firefly (T. Bennett)
3. Mr. Success (F. Sinatra)
4. Hoopa Hula (B. Johnson)
5. Song Of The Bullfighter (A. Tancredi)
6. Come Back To Sorrento (L. A. Carroll)
7. Ways Of A Woman In Love (J. Cash)
8. Treasure Of Your Love (E. Rodgers)
9. Queen Of The Hop (Darin)
10. Once Upon A Time (Martin)

### AL WEAVER
WKBC—No. Wilkesboro, N.C.

1. Chantilly Lace (B. Bopper)
2. Whoa Mabel (B. Haley)
3. The Blob (5 Blobs)
4. Hoopa Hoola (B. Johnson)
5. Rockin' Mary (Champs)
6. Bo Diddley (J. Rodgers) (LP)
7. Cannon Ball (D. Eddy)
8. Baby Be Mine (Crewcuts)
9. It's Only Make Believe (C. Twitty)
10. Fallin' (C. Francis)

**CHICAGO:**

Art Talmadge and Tommy Schlesinger of Mercury are convinced that Jape Richardson (KTRM-Beaumont, Texas), more widely known as **The Big Bopper**, is a great guy. Jape flew back to Chi to rerun his telefilm which was destroyed in an accident at the lab.; and then returned to New Orleans in time to make a club date.

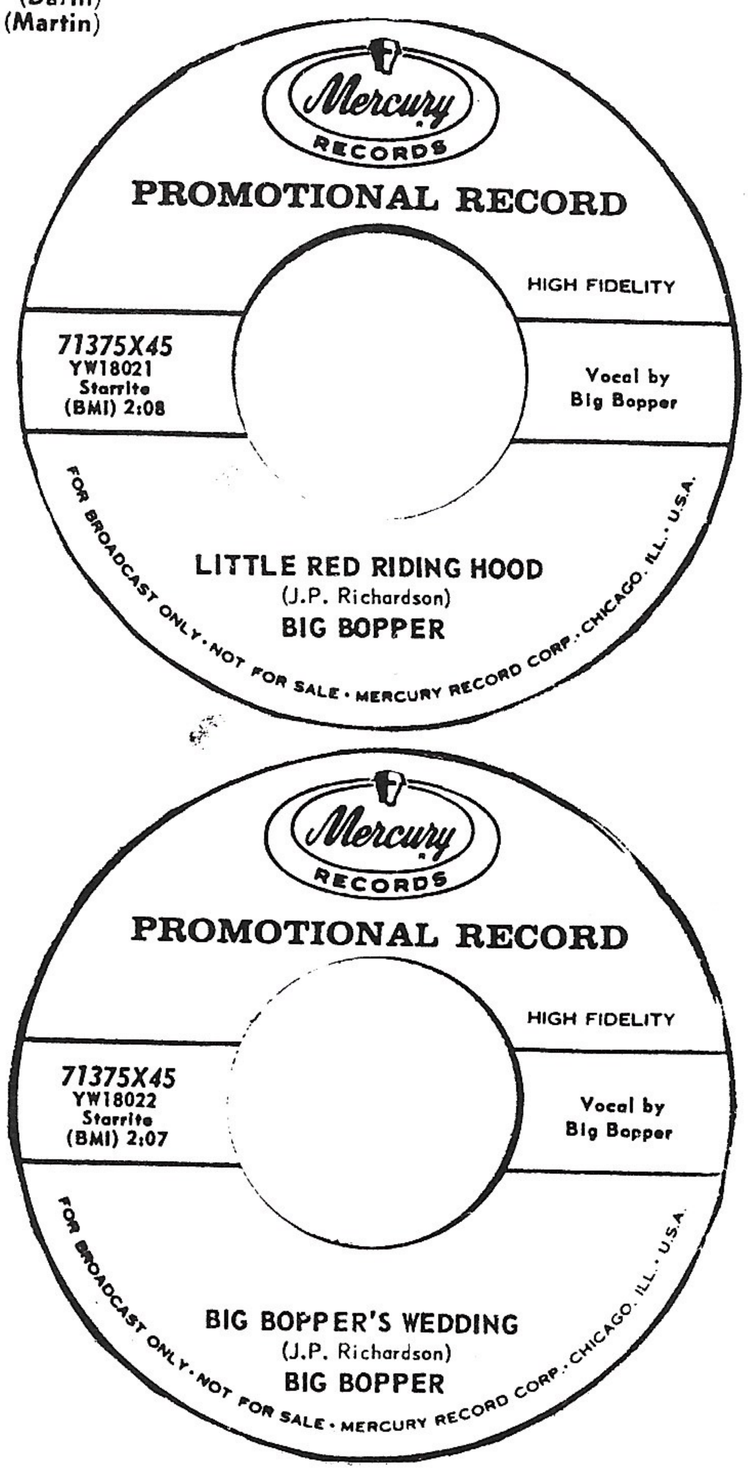
## NOVEMBER 1, 1958

**BIG BOPPER**
**LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD (Starrite, BMI)**
**BIG BOPPER'S WEDDING (Starrite, BMI)**

"Little Red Riding Hood" is a funky, driving side that gets a vigorous vocal from Bopper who is frantically paced by rhythmic ork support. Flip is a novelty item about a rockin' wedding that is also read with gusto. Both sides are strong contenders. **Mercury 71375**

## NOVEMBER 10, 1958

# THE BIG BOPPER



# DISC JOCKEY
# SIXTY-SECOND SPECIAL

| MEP-53 | SONG TITLE | COMPOSER | PUBLISHER | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SIDE 1-A** | | | | |
| TRACK 1 | Ma Ma Ma Marie<br>Vocal by<br>The Gaylords | Adapted by<br>Harold Barlow | Greenwich Music<br>(ASCAP) | 1:07 |
| TRACK 2 | Chantilly Lace<br>Vocal by the<br>Big Bopper | J. P. Richardson | Glad Music<br>(BMI) | 0:51 |
| **SIDE 2-B** | | | | |
| TRACK 1 | Kathy-O<br>Vocal by<br>The Diamonds | C. Tobias<br>R. Joseph<br>J. Sher | Northern Music<br>(ASCAP)<br>From the Univer-<br>sal-International<br>Picture<br>"Kathy-O" | 1:06 |
| TRACK 2 | You Cheated<br>Vocal by the<br>Del Vikings<br>with Hal Mooney<br>& His Orchestra | Don Burch | Balcones Pub-<br>lishing Company<br>(BMI) | 1:04 |

MERCURY RECORDS, 35 EAST WACKER DRIVE, CHICAGO 1, ILLINOIS

# Big Bopper In St. Louis

ST. LOUIS—The Big Bopper (deejay Jape Richardon, KTRN-Beaumont, Texas) of "Chantilly Lace" fame made a quick trip into St. Louis recently on the way back to his own disk jockey job in Beaumont. Two of Radio Station K.W.K.'s outstanding personalities, Reed Farrell and King Richard, seem to feel that they also have potential as recording artists and are giving The Bopper a demonstration of their vocal talents before a crowd of approving youngsters at St. Louis University High School. Pictured, left to right in the center are The Big Bopper, Richard, and Farrell.

# The Cash Box
# Disk of the Week

**"BIG BOPPER'S WEDDING" (2:07) [Starrite BMI—Richardson]**

**"LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD" (2:08) [Starrite BMI—Richardson]**

**BIG BOPPER (Mercury 71375)**

BIG BOPPER

● The Big Bopper, who has one of the year's biggest sleeper hits way up on the charts in "Chantilly Lace", follows thru with another delightful recitation novelty set against a rock and roll backdrop in "Big Bopper's Wedding". Most amusing teen novelty with Bopper asking the question, "How did I get tangled up in this marriage bit". Very funny lyric the kids should thoroughly enjoy. Flip has the Bopper doing a modern rock and roll version of the fairy tale, "Little Red Riding Hood". Lad has a style that will sell a heap of records.


★ GENE VINCENT and BLUE CAPS
Singing "Be Bop A Lua," "Yes I Love You, Baby" and "Elvis Presley Band"

☆ TONY and JOE
singing "The Freeze"

★ JERRY BYRNE
singing "Lights Out"

★ BIG BOPPER
singing "Chantilly Lace"

☆ ART and DOTTY TODD
singing "Chanson D'Amour"

☆ JOHNNY GARDNER
singing "Little Starry Eyes"

Plus DON GIBSON—DALE HAWKINS
BARBARA ALLEN—SANFORD CLARK
NICK NOBLE and all of the Popular WTIX Disc Jockeys
Larry Wilson—Dick Braun
Ken Karlton—Richard Fahey
John Barrett—Rod Roddy
Bud Boudreaux and John Powers

FREE SHOWS at 7:00-9:15 & 11

Pontchartrain Beach

NOVEMBER 15, 1958


THE BIG NEW HITS ARE ON Mercury

SOLID CHART CLIMBERS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Smoke Gets In Your Eyes | THE PLATTERS | 71383 |
| Little Red Riding Hood AND Big Bopper's Wedding | THE BIG BOPPER | 71375 |
| The Wedding | JUNE VALLI | 71382 |
| Walking Along | THE DIAMONDS | 71366 |
| Come Prima | TONY DALLARA | 71327 |
| Pretend Cha-Cha | RALPH MARTERIE | 71379 |
| FLAMINGO L'Amore | THE GAYLORDS | 71369 |
| With This Ring | RUSTY DRAPER | 71388 |
| How Could You | DEL VIKINGS | 71390 |

SMASH FOLLOW UP TO HIS NO.1 HIT

WHY CAN'T I GET THROUGH TO YOU BY

CONWAY TWITTY

Mercury RECORDS

MERCURY 71394

DECEMBER 1, 1958

6 to 5...Take Your Choice...One Side Will Win!

Big Bopper's Wedding
AND
Little Red Riding Hood
THE BIG BOPPER

71375


NOVEMBER 17, 1958

# TED STEELE'S Thanksgiving Holiday Bandstand Show

**Ted Steele** (WMCA-N. Y., N. Y.) recently signed fourteen record artists to appear on an upcoming stage show to be held at the Brooklyn Paramount Theater November 26th through 30th. Among the wax notables slated to appear are **The Big Bopper, Frankie Avalon, Clyde McPhatter,** and **Jerry Butler** and **The Impressions.** The event, Steele's first stage show in his 20 years in radio and television, will also introduce two of WMCA's more than capable disk jockeys, **Scott Muni,** of the "Scott Muni Show" heard daily between 3 and 5 P.M., and **Joe O'Brien** who hosts "Joe's Place" daily from 7 to 8 p.m. and 10:30 to 11:55 P.M.

NOVEMBER 5, 1958

## Steele Sets Talent for Holiday Show

NEW YORK — The talent line-up for the Ted Steele Bandstand Show, which will grace the stage of the Brooklyn Paramount Theater for five days over the Thanksgiving holiday, has just about been completed. Scott Muni, another key WMCA deejay at the New York station, will help Steele with the emseeing chores of the show. Talent line-up to date includes the Kalin Twins, Connie Francis, Clyde McPhatter, Cozy Cole, Big Bopper, Jimmie Clanton, Jerry Butler, Frankie Avalon, the Royal Tones, Dickie Doo and the Don'ts, the Solitaires, and five other acts.

Steels and Muni will make their radio broadcasts directly from the Paramount Theater while the show is in progress. Show will open on Wednesday, November 26, and run thru Sunday, November 30.

NOVEMBER 3, 1958

## Steele To Present Top Recording Stars In Thanksgiving Day Show Nov. 26-30

NEW YORK—Ted Steele, WMCA dee jay and well-known band-leader, announced last week the signing of fourteen featured recording stars to appear in person in his upcoming stage show, "Ted Steele's Band Stand," at the Brooklyn Paramount Theatre, November 26th through November 30th.

In his first stage appearance of a 20-year radio and television career, Steele will present a big name list of performers, including: Connie Francis, the Big Bopper, the Royaltones, Dicky Doo and the Don'ts, Donnie Owens, Jimmy Clanton, the Shields, Cozy Cole, the Solitaires, the Kalin Twins, Frankie Avalon, Clyde McPhatter, Thurston Harris and Jerry Butler and the Impressions. The complete list of performers will be announced at a later date.

"Ted Steele's Band Stand" will introduce WMCA Disk Jockey Scott Muni in his first public appearance in the New York area. Muni's "Scott Muni Show" is heard daily over WMCA between 3 and 5 p.m. and from 8:30 till 10:30 p.m. Also appearing as a featured guest will be Joe O'Brien, another WMCA air personality and host of "Joe's Place," broadcast daily from 7 till 8 p.m. and from 10:30 until 11:55 p.m.

"We hope to have a line-up of approximately 20 top attractions," said Steele, "and we may do as many as five or six shows a day. We'll just keep going as long as we have the youngsters to entertain."

Steele's present plans are to stage similar in-person shows four or five times during the year around holidays.

NOVEMBER 5, 1958

# PROGRAM

Cozy Cole
Frankie Avalon
Connie Francis
Clyde McPhatter
Jimmie Clanton

---

The Kalin Twins
The Big Bopper
Dicky Doo & The Dont's
The Royal Tones

---

Donnie Owens
The Shields
The Solitaires
Lloyd Price
Jimmy Butler
Barbara Evans
The Clusters
The Twins

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

## Steele Hosts Comedy of Errors

The Brooklyn Paramount Theater played host to a modern-day comedy of errors last Wednesday (26) with an in person rock and roll revue, emseed by New York deejay Ted Steele. As the artists came on stage they each experienced a feeling of emptiness. This was due to the fact that the 4,200-seat theater had more then 4,000 vacant seats during the first performance.

Steele unfortunately was not right for the emsee role. He was constantly getting in the way of the performing acts and his clapping to the music was often out of rhythm. From the moment the curtain rose things began to go badly. The first few acts, consisting of Barbara Evans, the Shields, and the Clusters, were drowned out by the Lloyd Price band.

The Rovaltones' performance was held up for 5 minutes while stage-hands frantically searched for the performer's guitar, which apparently had been misplaced. During this five minutes Steele interviewed the cats, bringing protests from the audience who wanted less talk and more music. Later on in the show, singer Andy Rose also had guitar trouble. His electric guitar was not misplaced, but due to a power failure it was 10 minutes before he could start his act. Rose tried to fill up the time by talking to the audience to rather dull results.

Top act in the whole show, both from a performance point of view and the way he was received, was Clyde McPhatter. He fractured the audience with his renderings of "Have Mercy Baby," "Just to Hold My Hand," and "A Lover's Question." Connie Francis, Jimmy Clanton, the Kalin Twins, and Frankie Avalon also went over well, all of them singing their top record hits. Also on the bill were such strong record names as Dickey Doo and the Don'ts, Cozy Cole, Donnie Owens, Jerry Butler, the Solitaires, Big Bopper, and Johnny Love. Seymour Steinbigle.

# the big bopper

The Big Bopper, whose real name is J. P. Richardson, was born in Sabine Pass, Texas, on Oct. 24, 1932. He attended public schools in Beaumont, Texas, like most youngsters, and upon graduating from high school, he worked as a part-time radio disk jockey while attending college.

This was the first part of his dream of happiness, success and security coming true. Having been interested in music since a boy, the opportunity to work at a radio station and attend college was the realization that his fantasy for happiness and success was in the field of music.

During this time he assumed the name Big Bopper and on this show played guitar and sang, with most of the listeners not knowing his identity, but it was the most popular show on Radio Station KTRM, in Beaumont, Tex.

The Big Bopper continued to succeed in radio. As a writer of songs he started placing his material with other artists, and soon was playing his own songs, sung by someone else, on his radio show. At this time he was offered a recording contract, and he recorded and released four of his compositions, as Jape Richardson on Mercury Records.

J. P. spent two years in the Army as a Radar Instructor. On his release he re-entered radio and hit the top popularity list again by breaking the continuous broadcasting record, at the time, and rejoining KTRM as Program Director.

In June, 1958, J. P. wrote a song entitled, "Purple People Eater Meets Witch Doctor," which was recorded by various artists. However, it was his desire to record it under the name of the Big Bopper. Arrangements were made for a recording session and for the other side of the release he submitted another of his own tunes, "Chantilly Lace." The rest is musical history; the Big Bopper has become a household word and "Chantilly Lace" one of the nation's top songs.

*Hellooo Baby.....*

# THIS IS THE BIG BOPPER

## With Hits Back to Back!

**Big Bopper's Wedding**

**Little Red Riding Hood**

MERCURY 71375

Mercury RECORDS

# Prize In Big Bopper Contest Is Big Bopper

CHICAGO—Because The Big Bopper was in New York for a television appearance, and could not be in Nashville to meet his friends at the 7th Annual National Country Music DJ Festival, Mercury Promotion Executives, Ken Myers and Tommy Schlesinger, conceived the idea of sponsoring a contest for the DJ's, the first prize of which would be, The Big Bopper, in person, for an evening, free of any expense and for whatever promotion, dance, or show of the winning disk jockey's choosing.

Using the timeliness of fall as the backdrop, a football contest, Mercury's "Pigskin and Platter Predictions," was created. A disk jockey had to predict the winners of seven college football games, played on Saturday, November 22. Each of the seven games chosen had something in common with the titles of Mercury's seven current plug songs. For example: The Duke-North Carolina game pitting the youth of tobacco land, was tied in with The Platters' recording of "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes."

Gloria Jett of Nashville was selected as "Miss All American Mercury" and throughout the three-day convention, recruited willing contestants in the lobby of the Andrew Jackson Hotel.

Besides The Bopper, other prizes included, a stereophonic record player, a television set and transistor radios.

The winners were: first prize—The Big Bopper, Lou Erck, KSST, Sulphur Springs, Texas; second prize—stereo player, Norman Hall, WBNC, Boonville, Indiana; third prize—television set, Jack Darnell, WNVA, Norton, Virginia; and fourth prize—transistor radio, Hank Lazarone, KDBS, Alexandria, Virginia.

Among members of the Mercury Organization attending the conclave were: artists, George Jones, Jimmie Skinner and Margie Singleton; Art Talmadge, Vice-president; Myers, Director of Promotion and Advertising; Schlesinger, Publicity Director; Michael Kerr, Radio and Television Station Relations Manager; Shelby Singleton, Southern Region Representative and Distributors; H. W. "Pappy" Daily of Houston and Dallas; Art Godwin of Atlanta; Hutch Carlock of Nashville and Bill Fitzgerald of Memphis.

**Robert Hooker (KTRM-Beaumont, Texas) reports that former DJ and PD Jape (Big Bopper) Richardson is doing okay as a record artist according to the Favorite Fifty. "Big Bopper's Wedding" is the number one song in both the pop and r&b charts, and, as an extra kick, the number one country tune is "Treasure Of Love" by George Jones on Mercury, written by Jape Richardson.**

## DECEMBER 20, 1958

Ken Ritter, Ken-Rick Publ., letters that the pubbery's tune, "The Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor", backed by "Chantilly Lace", cut on Mercury by the **Big Bopper**, has been released on EMI Records, Ltd. in England. The firm also has a release by **Rick Johnson**, on the D label, tabbed "Reprieve Of Tom Dooley" and "Barbara Allen" and early indications, adds Ken, is that the "Dooley" offering will be a big side. Sez Ken, "'Reprieve Of Tom Dooley' presents the real story of Tom Dooley and I know your readers will be glad to learn that he didn't hang after all, but our research shows that he was actually freed".

## JANUARY 31, 1959

**Mercury's Big Bopper** reports from Beaumont, Texas that **Benny Barnes**, who had been heading his own band and playing dates in the Texas.-La.-Gulf Coast area, is now working as a single. The chanter, whose latest chart item is "Heads You Win, Tails I Lose", returned to the managerial fold of **William G. Hall**, who also manages the Bopper. Benny'll continue to headquarter in Beaumont and can be contacted at P. O. Box 152.

## DECEMBER 6, 1958

# THE BILLBOARD'S BEST BUYS

These records have shown the greatest national SALES BREAKOUT potential this week for the first time. Action sides are listed in capital letters.

**POP**

**MY HAPPINESS** ..... **Connie Francis**
(Happiness, ASCAP) Never Before (Saunders, ASCAP) M-G-M 12738

**PEEK-A-BOO** ..... **The Cadillacs**
(Tri-Park, BMI) Oh, Oh, Lolita (Wemar, ASCAP) Josie 846

**THE TEEN COMMANDMENTS** ..... **Paul Anka, George Hamilton IV and Johnny Nash**
(Pamco, BMI) If You Learn to Pray (Ampco, ASCAP) ABC-Paramount 9974

**BIG BOPPER'S WEDDING** ..... **Big Bopper**
**LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**
(Starrite, BMI) (Starrite, BMI) Mercury 71375

**DONNA** ..... **Ritchie Valens**
(Kemo, BMI) La Bamba (Kemo, BMI) Del Fi 4110

**C&W**

**I GOTTA TALK TO YOUR HEART** ..... **Hank Locklin**
(Starday, BMI) The Other Side of the Door (Tray, ASCAP) RCA Victor 7393

*The above are previous Billboard Spotlight picks*

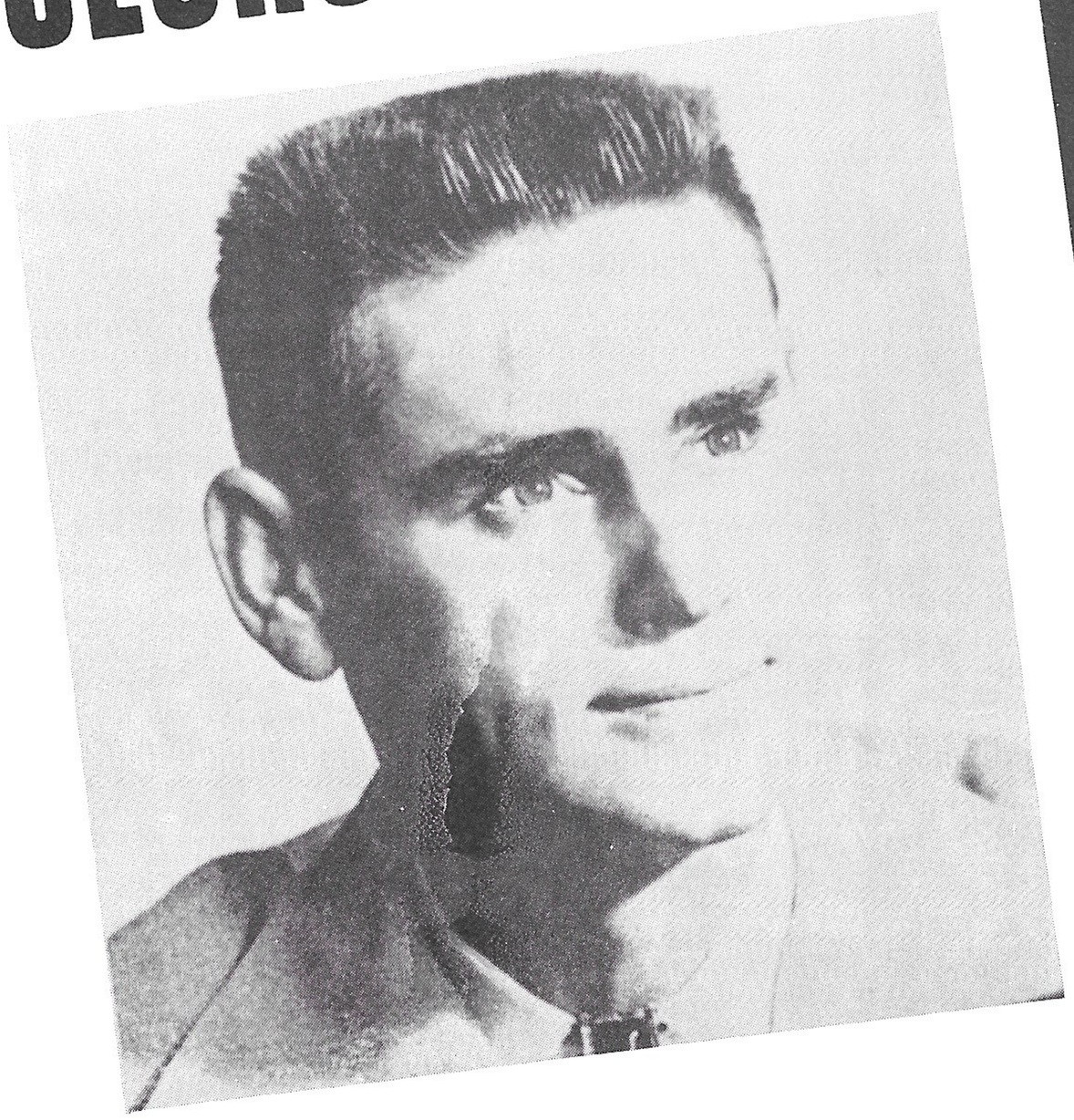
**R&B**

NO SELECTIONS THIS WEEK.

## FEBRUARY 7, 1959

The "Hound Dog" Anniversary show, staged recently by **George (Hound Dog) Lorenz** at the State Theater, Hartford, featured an all-teen-age six-piece band from Hartford. The acts on the bill, including **Connie Francis, Big Bopper, Little Anthony** and others praised the band for its job. Now the boys, known as the **Moonriders**, have cut sides for Candy Records, Hartford label.

# GEORGE JONES



# RECORD ROUNDUP

GEORGE JONES

## MERCURY — "TREASURE OF LOVE" BACKED WITH "IF I DON'T LOVE YOU."

George Jones scores once again on a twin-hit Mercury disc dubbed "Treasure Of Love" and "If I Don't Love You." "Love" is a tender and romantic item that is given a truly warm reading by this Country boy — while "If I Don't Love You (Grits Ain't Groceries)" is a bright, bouncy ditty which George handles well. Actually, you fans can go right ahead and take your pick as to which side will take off. But, once again, George Jones proves that nothing can beat Country music, 'cause both sides are one-hundred per cent "pure Country."

COWBOY SONGS—1958

THE
CROWN
PRINCE
OF
COUNTRY
MUSIC
GEORGE
JONES
CHARTBOUND AGAIN
Treasure Of Love
AND
If I Don't Love You
With a long series of Country Record Hits to his credit, George Jones has been acclaimed the greatest country talent since the late Hank Williams. George is country all the way and he really belts out these two powerhouse songs. It's George Jones on Mercury for the quickest and surest country music action.
ORDER TODAY!
MERCURY 71373
Mercury
RECORDS

HOT

# WHITE LIGHTNING
## GEORGE JONES
*C&W smash breaking POP!*

J. P. Richardson, along with George Jones, wrote *"Treasure Of Love"* and *"If I Don't Love You."* It was released by George Jones on Mercury Records. A short time later, George recorded the classic, *"White Lightning,"* which was written by Richardson. This song went all the way to the top of the country and western charts.

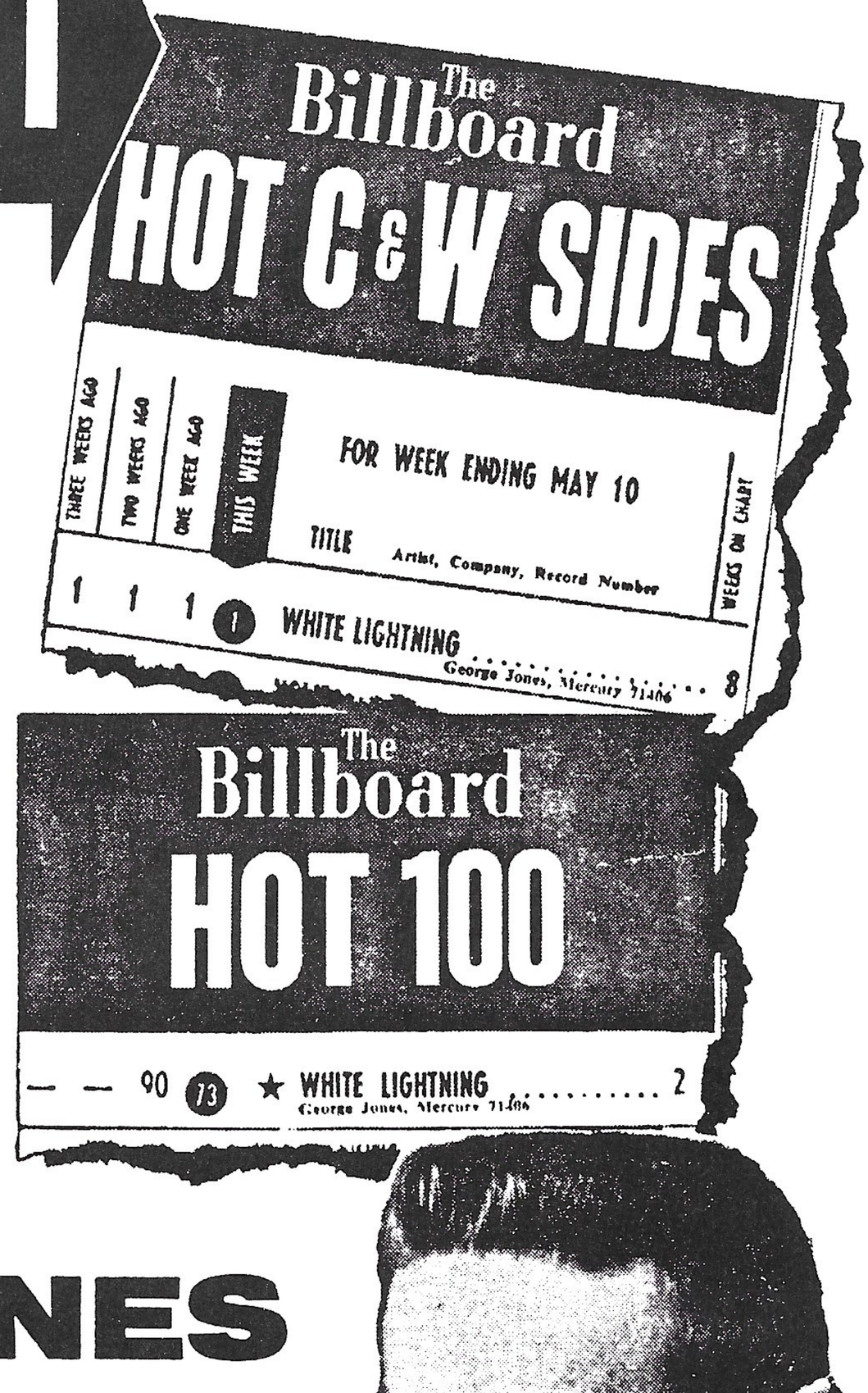
# OUR #1 C&W HIT

*Now crackling the pop charts!*

# "WHITE LIGHTNING"

*by*

# GEORGE JONES



Mercury® RECORDS

MERCURY 71406

MAY 18, 1959

**GEORGE JONES**

**WHITE LIGHTNING (Starrite, BMI)**
**LONG TIME TO FORGET (Starday, BMI)**

Jones should please traditional fans with his deliveries on these two fine sides. "Lightning" is a swiftly rendered ditty that tells of the joys of home-brewed "Likker." Flip is a weeper, sung in hill style. Both are strong entries.

**Mercury 71406**

A BILLBOARD PICK



FEBRUARY 9, 1959

# Show Goes On Despite Death Of 3

MOORHEAD, Minn. (AP) — A group of young entertainers, saddened by the deaths of three singing stars of their troupe who were killed in a plane crash, staged a rock 'n' roll show last night to the delight of more than 2,000 screaming, whistling teenagers.

The three recording stars were killed early yesterday when their four-place chartered plane crashed in a snow-covered farm field near Mason City, Iowa. They had just completed an engagement in Clear Lake, Iowa, and were headed for Fargo, N.D. Others in the troupe took a chartered bus.

**DEAD IN CRASH**

Dead in the crash were singers Buddy Holly, 22, of Lubbock, Tex.; Ritchie Valens, 17, of Los Angeles, and J. P. (Big Bopper) Richardson, 28, of Beaumont, Tex., and the pilot, Roger Peterson, 21, of Clear Lake.

The show at Moorhead had been canceled after other members of the troupe heard of the plane crash but later they decided to appear in the show-must-go-on tradition.

Two shows had been scheduled but only one was held. Members paid tribute to the victims during the performance.

**CROWD SCREAMS**

The crowd of teen-agers screamed, clapped and whistled as the rock 'n' roll groups sang their best selling numbers.

Valens quit high school in San Fernando last year for a rock 'n' roll singing career and was an overnight sensation. One of his records became a top seller and he recently finished his first movie. Holly, singing star of "The Cricketts," had among his records two that reportedly sold more than a million and a half copies each. Richardson also had recorded several hit songs.

INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

FEBRUARY 4, 1959

# 3 Rock 'N' Roll Singers Killed In Plane Crash

MASON CITY, Iowa (AP)— Three of the nation's top rock 'n' roll idols were killed during a light snow when their chartered plane crashed shortly after taking off from the airport here early today.

The trio, Buddy Holly, 22, of Lubbock, Texas; Ritchie Valens, 17, of Los Angeles, and J. P. Richardson, 24, of New Orleans, who styled himself "Big Bopper," had completed an engagement at nearby Clear Lake a short time before.

They were on their way to Fargo, N.D., for an appearance tonight.

The four-place plane was chartered from the Dwyer Flying Service of Mason City. The pilot was Roger Peterson of Clear Lake, who also was killed.

Cause of the crash was not determined, although authorities tentatively blamed weather conditions.

Holly, who sang with the Crickets, sailed to rock 'n' roll fame with his recording of "Peggy Sue."

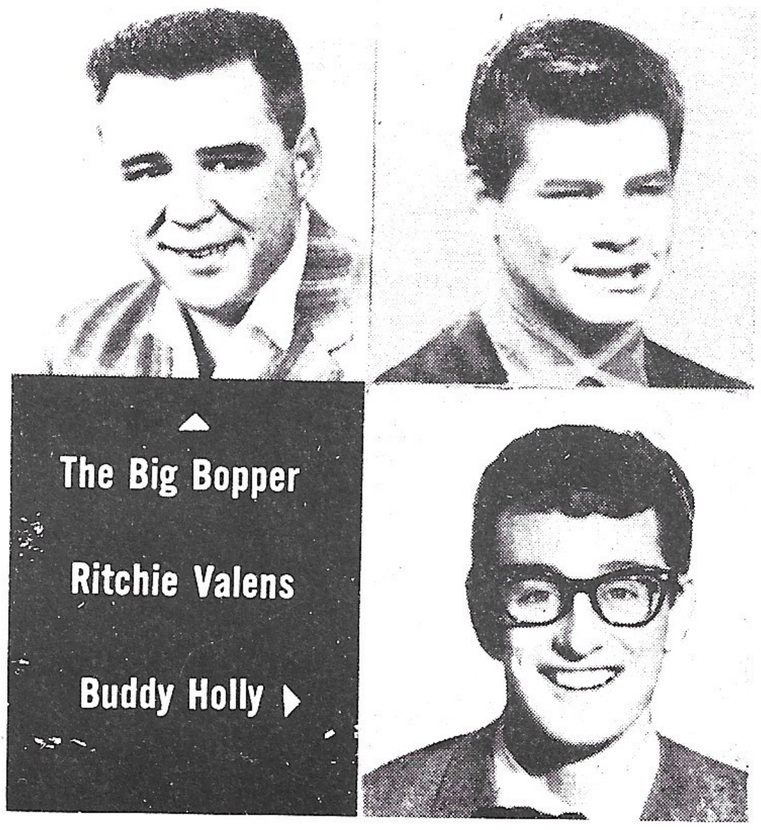
Richardson gained famed through his recording of "Chantilly Lace" and the more recent "Big Bopper Wedding."

Valens has one of the current top hits, a recording "Donna."

They had appeared on various television shows and were idols of the teen-age rock 'n' roll set.

INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

FEBRUARY 3, 1959




# Three Rock-Rollers Die In Plane Crash

Mason City, Iowa, Feb. 3. — Three rock 'n' roll performers—Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly and J. P. Richardson—were killed here today when their chartered light plane crashed on its way to a Fargo, N.D., appearance. Trio was part of a troupe, booked by General Artists, playing the midwest, but major portion of company was traveling to Fargo via chartered bus.

Valens, 17, lived in Pacoima, Calif., while Holly, 22, resided in Texas, and Richardson, 24-year-old singer billed as "Big Bopper," was from Louisiana. Also killed in crash was the pilot, who lived in Clear Lake, Iowa, where group appeared last night.

All three of the singers were on a notably quick upsurge in popularity, with each having records which sold more than a million copies. Valens' big hit was "Donna," Holly's was "Peggy Sue" and Richardson's was "Chantilly Lace." Valens recently completed his first film role in Hal Roach's "Go, Johnny, Go," and had been optioned for another to roll in April. Del-Fi Record Co., for whom Valens recorded, will release a new Valens album this week.

FEBRUARY 3, 1959

# Tragedy Fails To Halt GAC 'Winter Show'

CHICAGO — All dates were played by the GAC package, "Winter Show," following the death in a plane crash last Tuesday (3) of its three stars, Buddy Holly, J. P. (The Big Bopper) Richardson and Ritchie Valens.

Tuesday's (3) show went on before a capacity house in Moorehead with the Crickets, Dion and the Belmonts, and Frankie Sardo.

By Wednesday (4) night, for a date in Sioux City, GAC lined up Frankie Avalon and Kimmie Clanton to take over the headline spots and they were to continue on the tour to Des Moines, Thursday; Cedar Rapids, Ia., Friday; Spring Valley, Ill., Saturday; Chicago, Sunday, and other dates thru February 15.

At Mercury Records, a.&r. chief Art Talmadge canceled a Big Bopper release in time to substitute an appropriate side from the singer's new album, a religious tune called "Someone Watching Over You." It is coupled with "Walking Through My Dreams."

FEBRUARY 9, 1959

**FRANK HARVEY** *recalls the highlights of three famous Rock stars who died together at the height of their flourishing careers —*

# BUDDY HOLLY, BIG BOPPER and RITCHIE VALENS

**THE death of three international vocal personalities—Buddy Holly, Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens—in a tragic U.S. air crash this week has not only shocked the entire world, but brought to a sudden end promising careers at the height of their fame.**

Buddy Holly of course, was the best known to British audiences and disc fans. As leader of The Crickets and in a solo capacity, he was directly responsible for nine hit parade entries in just over a year.

When visiting this country with the group last spring, it was obvious Buddy Holly deserved entire praise for the recording success of The Crickets—as the two other members did not sing at any time. They televised, apart from a nation-wide concert tour of England and Scotland.

BUDDY HOLLY

## First solo act

Buddy's fatal accident occurred during the first dates undertaken by him as a single artist—since parting company with The Crickets last autumn. It is coincidental that his most recent U.S. release is titled "It Doesn't Matter Any More" — while "Heartbeat" was his last entry in the British lists.

Analysing the 1958 Top Thirty charts on a points system, the total secured by Buddy, combined with The Crickets, placed him in third highest position. Notable solo hits by Buddy (and positions reached by them in sellers)—"Peggy Sue" (6), *"Listen To Me" (16), "Rave On" (5), "Early In The Morning" (17) and *"Heartbeat" (30)—all within a twelve-month period.

**Leading The Crickets, Buddy steered their first release to No. 1 in October, 1957 (*"That'll Be The Day"), followed by *"Oh Boy" (3), *"Maybe Baby" (4) and *"Think It Over" (11).**

Only last summer—on returning to America from his British tour—Buddy was secretly married, taking up residence in New York. Born in Lubbock (Texas) on September 7, 1936, his musical career commenced at the age of 8 with violin lessons—but later, a £15 guitar became his favourite instrument—and he became proficiently self-taught.

Buddy endeared himself to audiences and record buyers with tremendous attacking delivery; he had the rare gift of successfully transmitting an atmosphere of exhilaration from a recording studio to the listeners' turntables. The popular music industry has lost a brilliant young performer, but millions are hardly likely to forget his hallmark—stamped in so many ways in a brief space of time.

** Indicates titles which Buddy Holly was associated with as a composer.*

* * *

BIG BOPPER, a comparative newcomer to the forefront of hit-disc makers, was also born in Texas—at Sabine Pass (October 24, 1932); he was christened Jape Richardson

Three months ago, he was transformed from a moderately paid Beaumont (Texas) disc-jockey to a high-priced new star attraction. Sad to relate, his untimely death occurred before royalties for sales exceeding one million copies of "Chantilly Lace" had been received. Like Buddy Holly, Jape was a prolific composer, too—writing each of his Mercury titles.

BIG BOPPER

**Early this month, a follow-up to his first big seller was released here ("Big Bopper's Wedding"), while he co-authored both sides of Mercury's latest western singer, George Jones.**

Married with one child, J. P. Richardson graduated from high school to college, working as a part-time disc-jockey before appearances with a local minstrel show. He played guitar besides singing and was signed as station announcer on KTRM in Beaumont. Big Bopper spent two years in the army as a radar instructor before returning as programme director of the Beaumont radio station.

* * *

ALTHOUGH Ritchie Valens was comparatively unknown as an artist in Britain, undoubtedly this 17-year-old Californian-born personality was destined to challenge the world's top teenage idols. In America, he wrote and recorded "Come On Let's Go" (to the tune of 750,000 discs)—but Tommy Steele reaped the benefit here.

## In charts

For several months now Ritchie has been prominent in the U.S. charts with another personal composition, "Donna"—besides big sales independently for the reverse side, "La Bamba" His first albums have been completed—including an LP solely devoted to his guitar playing—which illustrates the proficiency attained as an instrumentalist.

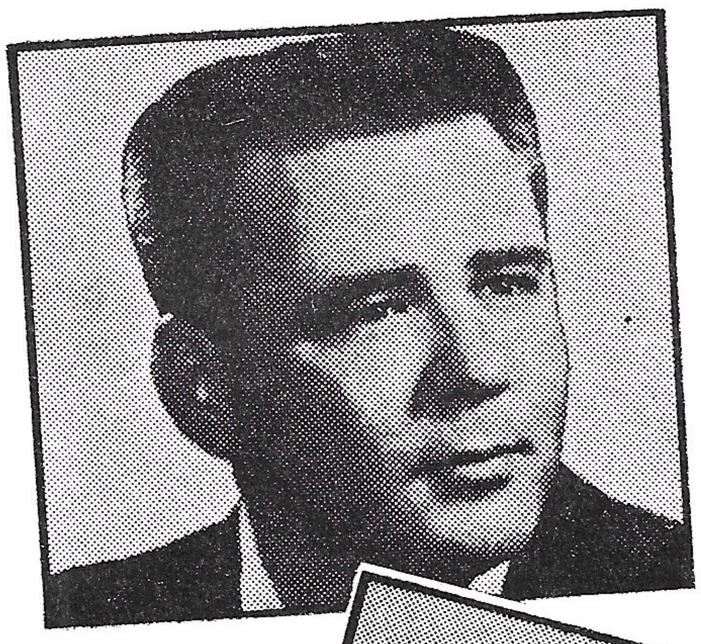
**He was scheduled to make his film début in a production starring disc-jockey Alan Freed, but it is not known if he completed work on the venture.**

RITCHIE VALENS

We mourn the loss of three talented singer-composers. Everything indicated they were each destined to mature into leading show business stars—until fate dealt a cruel blow; their ultimate potential, alas, will never be known.

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS—FEBRUARY 6, 1959

# IN MEMORIAM



*The world will long remember J. P. Richardson (Big Bopper), Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens for the wonderful songs they sang and the joy their singing brought us. Though they are gone to the great beyond, their memories will long live in our hearts.*

COUNTRY SONG ROUNDUP—JULY 1959

In respect to the memory of

# J.P. RICHARDSON

# THE BIG BOPPER



FEBRUARY 13, 1959

# Artists' Deaths Shock Industry

VALENS, RICHARDSON AND FRANKIE SARDO
KENOSHA, WISCONSIN—JANUARY 24, 1959

NEW YORK—Letters expressing shock at the untimely death of three rock 'n roll favorites, Ritchie Valens, J. P. ("Big Bopper") Richardson and Buddy Holly, in a plane crash near Mason City, Iowa, on Feb. 3 were received by **The Cash Box** soon after the tragedy.

The three stars had chartered a private plane to take them to a playing date in Fargo, N. D., after having performed in Clear Lake's surf ballroom the night before. Soon after take-off, the plane crashed, with authorities putting the snowy and windy weather to blame.

Seventeen-year-old Valens clicked big on his first recording for the Del-Fi label, "Come On, Let's Go", and went on to even greater success with his second date, the still very strong, "Donna". Valens hailed from San Francisco, where he lived with his widowed mother. He had recently completed his role in his first film, "Go, Johnny! Go".

Richardson, 24, was on leave as program director, deejay and singer on station KTRM in Beaumont, Texas where he had introduced a personality there, the "Big Bopper", the name he used when he cut the million seller, "Chantilly Lace" on Mercury. He was associated with KTRM for nine years.

Holly, 22, became known to teeners via "That'll Be The Day"; a date which also featured the Crickets. He later went over to Coral as a single, and came up with the smash, "Peggy Sue", though he retained his association with the Crickets on Brunswick.



PHOTO--STERELCZYK

(LEFT TO RIGHT): WBKB—TV CHICAGO DEEJAY JIM LOUNSBURY; RICHARDSON; DEBBIE STEVENS; FRANKIE SARDO AND BUDDY HOLLY—KENOSHA, WISCONSIN. JANUARY 24, 1959

Daily Mirror
WED FEB 4 1959
2½p FORWARD WITH THE PEOPLE
No. 17,150

Tragedy of 'Jape' Richardson

THEY CALLED HIM—

# BIG BOPPER

# TOP 'ROCK' STARS DIE IN CRASH

From BARRIE HARDING, New York, Tuesday

**THREE of America's top rock 'n' roll stars were killed in a plane crash today, a few hours after delighting teenagers at a "big beat" concert.**

**They were BUDDY HOLLY, whose recording of "That'll Be The Day" sold more than a million and a half copies; BIG BOPPER (Jape Richardson), singer of the current hit "Chantilly Lace"; and RITCHIE VALENS, composer of the Tommy Steele favourite "Come On, Let's Go."**

All three appeared last night at a winter ball for teenagers at Lake North, Iowa.

Early this morning, they boarded a small charter plane in Mason City to fly to Fargo, North Dakota, where they were billed to appear tonight.

**The plane took off in a slight snowstorm — and nothing more was heard of it.**

Hours later the pilot of a search plane spotted wreckage on a farm about ten miles from Mason City.

The bodies of the three stars and the pilot, Roger Peterson, lay near by.

Bad weather is blamed for the crash.

## On TV Here

**BUDDY HOLLY, 22, was married only seven months ago.**

He was the star of the trio called "The Crickets" and shot to the top of the hit parade with records like "That'll Be The Day" and "Peggy Sue."

Buddy visited Britain last March and was seen by millions of viewers in a "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" show.

**His latest record . . . called "It Doesn't Matter Any More" . . has just been released.**

**BIG BOPPER** was a disc jockey, and had appeared in minstrel shows where he created the "Big Bopper" character.

And that was the name he adopted for his first record—"Chantilly Lace"—which he also composed.

He was seen singing it, on film, on British TV recently.

Last week, "Chantilly Lace" was No. 12 in the Mirror's Pop Twenty.

Richardson, 24, was unmarried.

**RITCHIE VALENS** gave his age as twenty-one.

**But the Hollywood company dealing with his records said tonight that in fact he was only seventeen.**

He left school only last year.

*Buddy Holly . . . as Britain saw him.*

Like Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens, the Big Bopper was at his peak at the time of the crash. Only a few weeks before, he had waxed another of his compositions, "Walkin' Through My Dreams," another hit. This one together with the other fine Big Bopper numbers were released in a memorial album of his fine recordings. They will be treasured forever by his loyal fans.

# 3 Stars of Rock 'n' Roll Killed

Mason City, Iowa, Feb. 3 (AP).—Three rock 'n' roll singing stars, whose records and appearances stirred millions of teen-agers, were killed early today in an Iowa field

The four-place plane carrying the three and their pilot crashed soon after taking off in light snow and heavy gusts of wind from the Mason City Airport. Weather conditions were blamed for the crash.

### The Victims

Dead were Buddy Holly, 22, of Lubbock, Tex.; Ritchie Valens, 17, of Los Angeles; J. P. (Big Bopper) Richardson, 24, of Beaumont, Tex., and Roger Peterson, 21, of Clear Lake, Iowa, the pilot.

Their troupe had appeared at the Surf Ballroom in nearby Clear Lake last night and they were flying in a chartered plane to Fargo, N. D., in advance of the troupe's engagement there tonight. The others went by chartered bus.

### Only One Married

Valens recently finished his first motion picture, "Go Johnny! Go." His first recording six months ago, "Donna," sold more than a million copies, the Del-Fi Record Co. said.

Holly hit the rock 'n' roll pinnacle with his recordings of "Peggy Sue" and "That'll Be the Day." Both reportedly sold more than a million and a half copies.

Richardson was on leave as a disk jockey, singer and radio program director at station KTRM in Beaumont. His "Chantilly Lace" was rated by Billboard for a time as the third most played record and was released to 37 other countries.

Richardson was married and the father of a daughter; Holly had been married recently, and Valens, billed as "the next Elvis Presley," was single.

**Buddy Holly, 22; Ritchie Valens, 17, and J. P. (Big Bopper) Richardson, 24 (l. to r.), who died in plane crash.**

(NEWS map by Staff Artist)

# HOT
# THE BIG BOPPER

This column extends its condolences to the families and friends of **Buddy Holly, J. P. (Big Bopper) Richardson and Ritchie Valens,** whose deaths occurred in a tragic plane crash earlier this week. All three left a distinct mark on the pop record scene and all three will be sorely missed by not only those who were close to them, but by many, many young record buyers who felt close to them in another way, as well.

**Valens, a 17-year-old Californian, was experiencing his first big surge of popularity with his Del Fi disk of "Donna," which at the time of his death was the number three record in the nation. Earlier, Valens had scored with "Come On, Let's Go." Richardson, a Texas disk jockey with some eight years' experience behind him, was a cleffer of some distinction and recently had made it big with "Chantilly Lace," on Mercury. The hit disk, oddly enough, was the flip side of the "Purple People Eater Meets the Witch Doctor," the original plug side of the record.**

Holly had been on the scene longest of all. A discovery of music man **Norman Petty** of Clovis, N. M., Holly had much to do with popularizing the so-called "Tex-Mex" rockabilly sound, with a number of smash hit records like "That'll Be the Day," "Peggy Sue," "Oh Boy," "Maybe Baby," "Rave On" and "Early in the Morning." His latest coupling, his first effort with a big string backing, was "It's Raining in My Heart," and in a way the ironical title, "It Really Doesn't Matter Anymore." But for many, it does matter, and Holly, Valens and Richardson will not be forgotten. In fact, Coral Records is rushing out an album of Buddy's biggest hits, under the title "The Buddy Holly Story."

**Veteran bookers, Tim Gale and Irvin Feld of GAC, originated the dance party tour idea with pop stars of which the departed trio comprised one. "We always fought against the idea of any of them chartering their own planes," said Gale. "It's a terrible thing." Gale added that the tour would be continued to its conclusion, with Frankie Valon and Jimmy Clanton jumping into the breach to help out.**

FEBRUARY 9, 1959

**"CHANTILLY LACE STARRING THE BIG BOPPER"—Mercury MG 20402**

The late J.P. ("Big Bopper") Richardson, a top teen attraction before his untimely death several weeks ago, is heard in twelve self-penned items, including his two big clicks, "Chantilly Lace" and "The Big Bopper's Wedding". The deck will be sought by many of the artist's teen admirers.

FEBRUARY 28, 1959

**MANY were stunned by the news of the deaths of Buddy Holly and "The Big Bopper". 2UE's disc jockey Bob Rogers tells you about it in his column on page 14 this week.**

In a letter written to Bob just before his death in a plane crash, "The Big Bopper" thanked all his Australian fans for the many letters he received, some 1,600 in all, including many from "Chucklers" readers.

"The Big Bopper", who was booked to come to Australia on February 22nd, enclosed 100 personally autographed photographs for Bob to distribute.

Bob Rogers says that the first 100 "Chucklers" readers to write to him at 2UE, 29 Bligh Street, Sydney, can have the signed photographs.

Only a few hours after the death of the famous recording star, Bob received a 'phone call from his manager, Bill Hall, in America, saying that "The Big Bopper" had spoken so much of Bob and all his Australian fans, that he thought Bob would like the news first before he heard it on news flashes.

**NEW YORK:**

The entire industry shocked by the airplane tragedy, last week, that so quickly ended the bright wax careers of **Ritchie Valens, Jape "Big Bopper" Richardson** and **Buddy Holly.** Our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the artists.

FEBRUARY 14, 1959

**CHANTILLY LACE**

**Big Bopper—Mercury MG 2040**

The late artist's LP (actually his first) will help to perpetuate his image among his many fans. "Chantilly Lace" and "Big Bopper's Wedding" are included along with 10 other tunes, also written by the Bopper (J. P. Richardson). With a good cover that jumps out, and coming in the wake of a million seller single, this can be expected to pull brisk action. Jocks will likely go for some of the not previously released sides.

A BILLBOARD PICK



FEBRUARY 23, 1959

# That Big, Big, Big, Bopper

**As this issue was about to go to press, we regretfully learned that J. P. Richardson lost his life in a plane crash over Mason City, Iowa. Though he is gone his memory will forever remain with us.**

J.P. Richardson was well known in the East Texas area as an entertainer because of his many appearances as a young man with the local Minstrel shows staged periodically, and was so widely accepted as a disc jockey that according to all surveys he was the number one Dee-Jay in the area. During this time he assumed the name Big Bopper and on this show played guitar and sang, with most of the listeners not knowing his identity, but it was the most popular show on radio station KTRM, in Beaumont, Texas.

J.P.'s endeavors to succeed in the entertainment field was interrupted for two years while he spent this time in the Army as a Radar Instructor. On his release from service he re-entered radio and hit the top popularity list again by breaking the continuous broadcasting record, at the time, and rejoining radio station KTRM as a program director.

In June, 1958, J.P. wrote a song titled; "Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor," which was recorded by various artists; it was his desire to record it under the name of The Big Bopper. Arrangements were made for a recording session and for the other side of the release he submitted another of his own tunes, "Chantilly Lace." The rest is musical history; The Big Bopper had become a house-hold word.



**THE BIG BOPPER**
**WALKING THROUGH MY DREAMS (Glad, BMI)**
**SOMEONE WATCHING OVER YOU (Glad, BMI)**

These two chart contenders by the late artist are sure to reap heavy spins. "Walking" has the Bopper on a fine performance of a moderate rocker. "Someone" is a sacred offering with simple, but effective choral backing. Both can score.

**Mercury 71416**

A BILLBOARD PICK

MARCH 2, 1959

**"WALKING THROUGH MY DREAMS" (2:27) [Glad BMI—Richardson]**
**"SOMEONE WATCHING OVER YOU" (2:29) [Glad BMI—Richardson]**

**THE BIG BOPPER (Mercury 71416)**

● There should be wide interest in these sides by the late R&R personality, with attention centering on the Big Bopper's humorous vocal bits on the light-hearted "Walking Through My Dreams". The artist is a convincing vehicle for the inspirational message of "Someone Watching Over You". Both could go.

MARCH 7, 1959

**RAY CAMPI**
**★★ The Man I Met**
D 1047—This tune is a tribute to the late Big Bopper who was killed in the tragic plane crash a month ago. Campi tries hard, but the material is weak. (Glad, BMI)

**★★ Ballad of Donna and Peggy Sue**
Campi pays tribute here to Ritchie Valens and Buddy Holly, the two singers killed in the crash with Big Bopper. The story is impressive and Campi sings it with feeling, going from the Donna ballad to a tribute for Sue. (Glad, BMI)

MARCH 16, 1959

**RAY CAMPI**

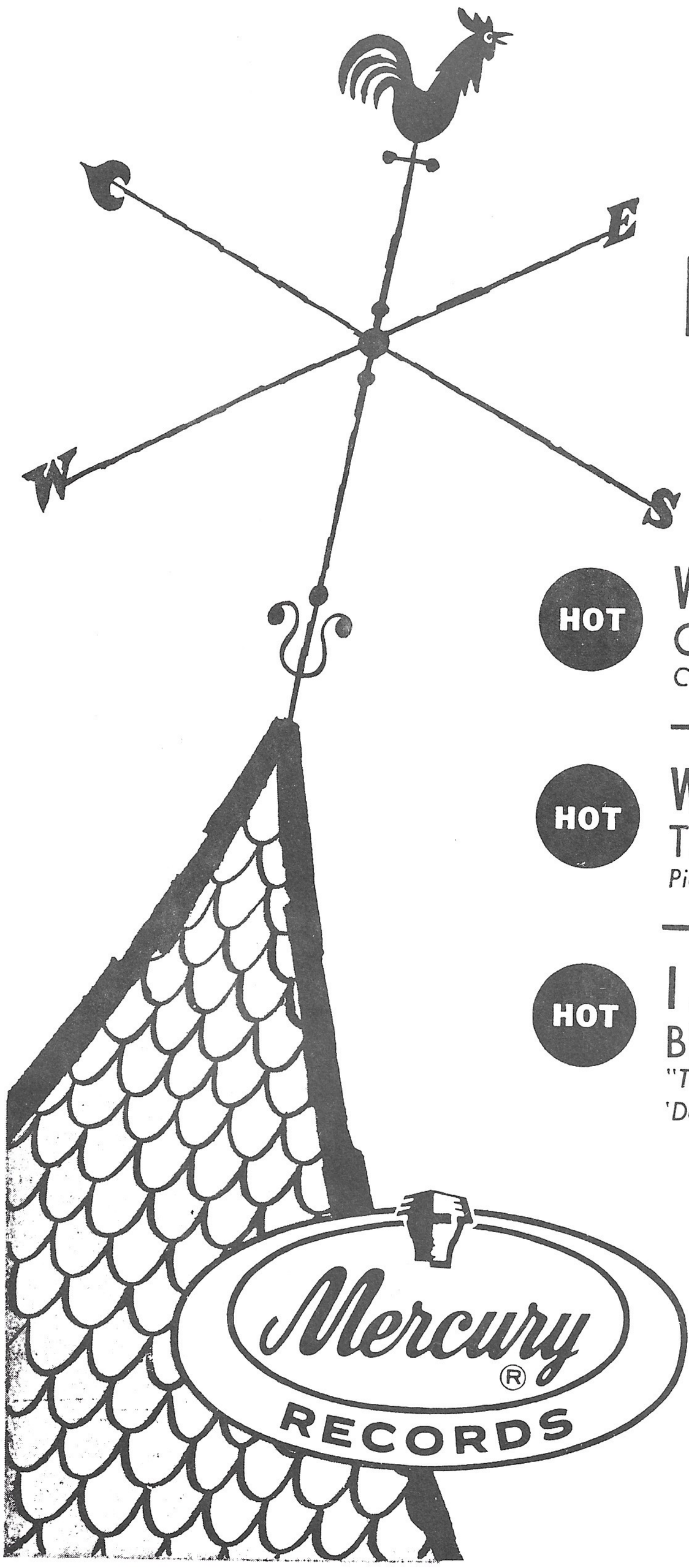
**(D 1047)**

**B** "BALLAD OF DONNA AND PEGGY SUE" (2:30) [Glad BMI—Green, Campi] The girl friends of the late Ritchie Valens and Buddy Holly are the theme of this rocka-ballad (and jump) performance by Campi. Jump portion comes about half-way down track.

**C+** "THE MAN I MET" (A TRIBUTE TO THE BIG BOPPER) (2:14) [Glad BMI — Green, Campi] The third rock star to die in the recent tragedy is paid tribute in this hard-beat performance.

MARCH 14, 1959

# Hotter than Blazes




## down South... NOW Blowin' a storm up North!

HOT

**WHITE LIGHTNING**
GEORGE JONES
71406
*C&W smash breaking POP!*

---

HOT

**WALKING THROUGH MY DREAMS**
THE BIG BOPPER
71416
*Pick in all trades!*

---

HOT

**I AIN'T GIVING UP NOTHING**
BEN HEWITT
71413
*"Tantalizing all-market rocker from 'Don't Be Cruel' School".....CASH BOX*

**...the big hit trademark!**

The families and friends of all those departed stars, including those of the late Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and J. P. (Big Bopper) Richardson, may take new heart. These artists have already been memorialized thru various records cut by other artists such as a tune called "Ballad of Donna and Peggy Sue." Meanwhile, Holly's record of "It Doesn't Matter Anymore," has hit the number 20 spot in this week's Hot 100 chart, carrying on for Holly even in death the comeback trail upon which he had embarked. Coral and Mercury both issued LP's following the death of Holly and the Big Bopper which will help perpetuate their memory in the minds of their fans. Richie Valens' "Donna," still remains a hot seller and a new Valens disk, "That's My Little Suzie," has just come out.

MARCH 23, 1959

**ROY DIXON & GORDON BAKER**
**KTRM—Beaumont, Texas**

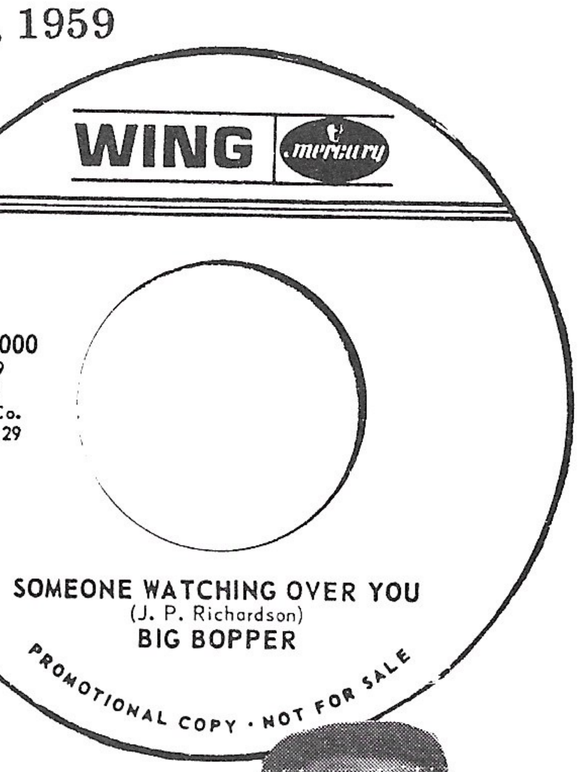
1. Walking Through My Dreams (B. Bopper)
2. It Doesn't Matter Anymore (B. Holly)
3. This Should Go On Forever (R. Bernard)
4. A Fool Such As I (Presley)
5. Where Were You (L. Price)
6. Going Out With The Tide (J. Gene)
7. Charlie Brown (Coasters)
8. Telling Lies (F. Domino)
9. Shirley (J. Fred)
10. Love's Made A Fool Of You (Crickets)

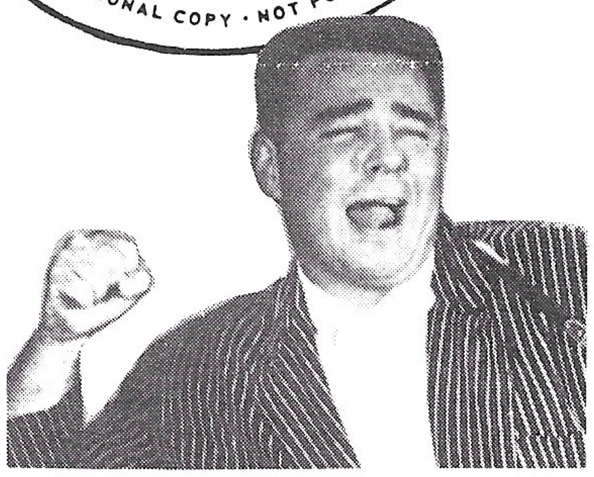
APRIL 11, 1959

**THE BIG BOPPER**
★★★★ **That's What I'm Talking About** MERCURY 71451—Personable reading by the late artist on an amusing rhythm-novelty with good lyrics. **(Glad, BMI)**

★★★★ **It's the Truth Ruth**
Another exuberant vocal stint on a catchy novelty with rockabilly-type tempo. **(Glad, BMI)**

APRIL 27, 1959



# A SALUTE TO BIG BOPPER

**We regret very much that the material for a full-bodied story on J. P. Richardson—the Big Bopper—arrived after this issue of 16 went to press. But we do want to say, "So long."**

**The Big Bopper was almost as wide as he was tall. He loved loud-striped suits and his big-brimmed Texas hats. He had pet names for his clothes. He had a coat named Melvin and a knee-length jacket called Zelda. He loved jive talk and funny jokes and his laughter was as much a part of his personality as his big voice and the twang of his guitar.**

**We'll miss him a lot.**

16 MAGAZINE

## J. P. RICHARDSON

Death took J. P. Richardson (The Big Bopper) while still in his twenties. 'Jape' was a triple threat talent. First, he was a winner at DJ activities in Texas. Next, song writing ability became one of his big plusses. And, finally, 'Jape' was a blast as an entertainment personality. Unique and new ideas in Rock and Roll performing came from 'Jape.' He was funny and at the same time a great rhythm king.

Born October 24, 1932, in Sabine Pass, Texas, he attended public schools in Beaumont, Texas. While in college he worked part-time as a disc jockey. He liked this work so much, he decided to think seriously about a full-time show business career. 'Jape' appeared in East Texas as an entertainer in local minstrel shows where he created the character of The Big Bopper. This was the real beginning of his sensational rise to fame.

The country-western music 'Jape sang around at various shows soon came to the attention of Harold "Pappy" Daily, veteran record distributor in Houston, Texas. "Pappy" liked 'Jape's' work so he signed him as both a song writer and recording artist. J. P. made four country and western recordings for Mercury records. The discs were hits, but it wasn't until he recorded Chantilly Lace that 'Jape' became nationally famous.

His comic antics and amazing versatility will be missed. 'Jape' was a true flag-carrier in the field of Rock and Roll.

TEEN—MAY 1959



THE BIG BOPPER
THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT
and
IT'S THE TRUTH, RUTH 71451

MAY 4, 1959

# The Man Behind The Name

Who's the cat with the real deep voice, who chants with swinging sounds and has a date with his baby at eight? It's that man with a talent and a beat, Jape Richardson. You don't know Jape? Oh yes you do, but not by that particular handle, he's more widly known as The Big Bopper. Yeah man, we've got the latest info on the "Chantilly Lace" guy himself, and thought you might like to know "the man behind the name." The Big Bopper hails from that ever loving "lone star state" of Texas and he came into this crazy, rockin' but wonderful world at Sabine Pass, Texas on October 24, 1932. After graduating from high school Jape attended college, and during college he worked part-time as a radio disc jockey.

Bopper had always dreamed of happiness, success and security and becoming a disc jockey was part of that dream come true. He had been interested in music since he was a boy, and becoming a deejay and working with records was the realization that his chance for happiness and success wasn't just a dream anymore — it was for real. He worked hard at making it so.

Jape, alias the Big Bopper, was known in the east Texas area as an entertainer also, because of his many appearances when he was a young man with the local minstrel shows. He was also so widely accepted as a disc jockey that according to all surveys he was the number one deejay in that area. It was during this time that he assumed the name Big Bopper. When he sang and played the guitar on the show, most of the listeners didn't know his true identity, yet his show was the most popular on Radio Station KTRM, in Beaumont, Texas.

The Big Bopper continued to succeed in radio and soon became program director of the station, but he didn't really dig this jive, he wanted higher up, so he started writing songs. He also started placing material with other artists, and was soon playing his own songs sung by someone else, on his own radio show. It was at this time that he was offered a recording contract by Mercury records for whom he recorded under his own name.

The Bopper's career was temporarily interrupted by that white-bearded relative, Uncle Sam. After a two year tour with the Army, Jape bounced back into radio and hit the top-pop list again, by breaking the "continuous-broadcasting" record. Then along came Mercury again and snatched the Bopper away — the rest you know. He wrote and recorded "Chantilly Lace" which skyrocketed into being one of the nation's top songs. His newest is "Big Bopper's Wedding" backed by "Little Red Riding Hood."

**THE BIG BOPPER**

(Mercury 71451)

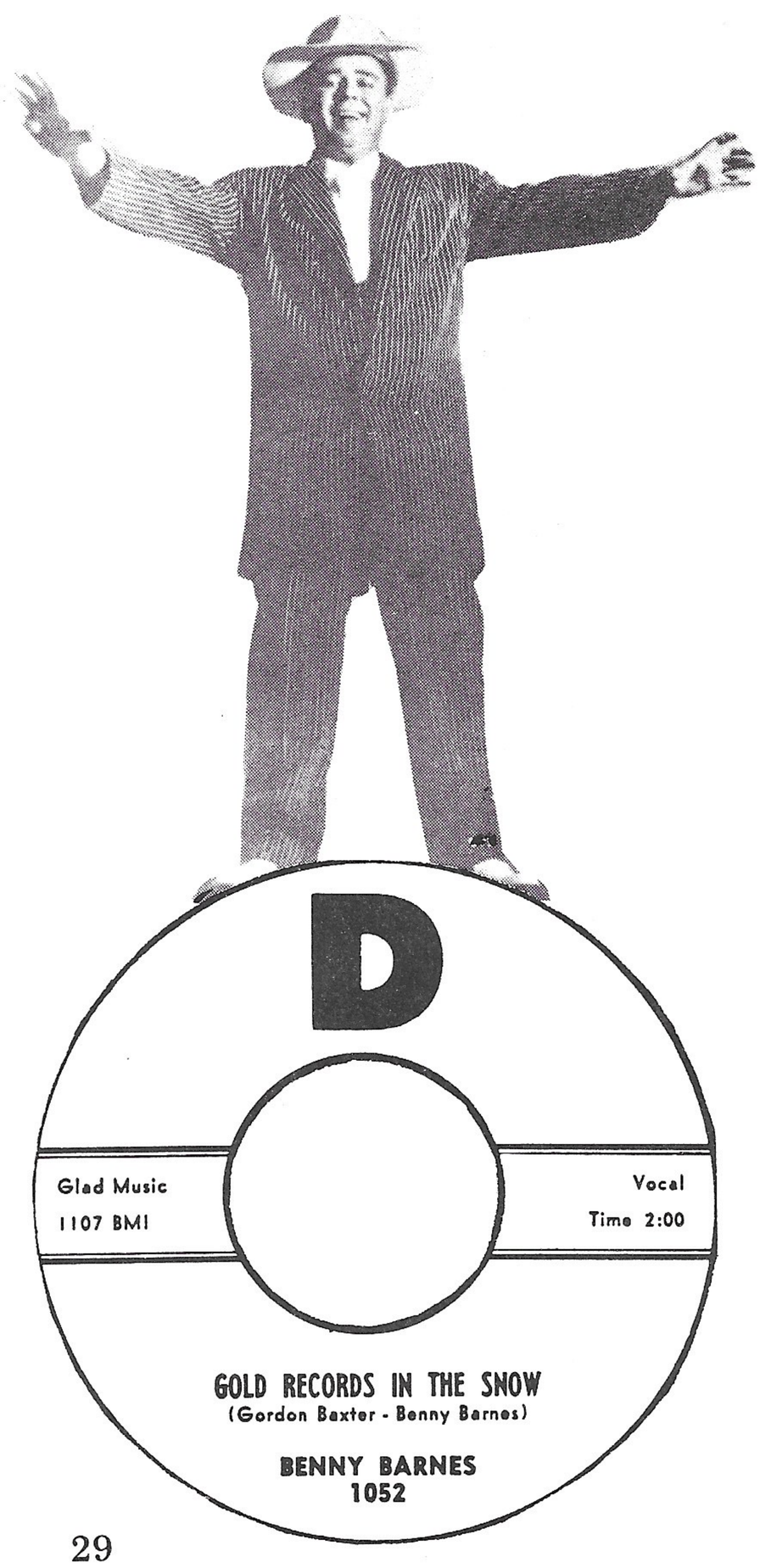
**B+** "IT'S THE TRUTH RUTH" (2:07) [Glad BMI—Richardson] The late star in a typically zany Big Bopper outing. Contagious beat affair, with lyrics the kids should enjoy.

**B** "THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT" (2:07) [Glad BMI—Richardson] More uptempo doings that has the performer having himself a rock ball.

MAY 2, 1959

AFTERMATH OF A TRAGEDY: The Big Bopper's widow, Adrianne Richardson (his real name was J. P. Richardson) became the mother of a boy a while ago. She named the child Jay Perry after his father.

MAY 1959



# IN THE R & R SPOTLIGHT-

Everyone knows by now of the tragedy that occurred to three young recording stars just a short while ago. Yes, we're talking about Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper. Their death came as quite a blow to their respective recording companies, managers, their friends in and out of the recording business and especially to their vast fan following. Everyone mourned, but what could anyone do? They were gone, leaving their fans with only memories. But somebody did do something, something to ease the pain of the trio's tragic death. His name is Tommy Dee and he wrote and recorded "Three Stars," a song dedicated to Buddy, Ritchie and the Bopper.

It was while he was at Radio Station KFXM in San Bernadino, California that the accident occurred. Knowing that this plane crash and the death of these three stars would come as quite a blow to many thousands of fans, Tommy wrote "Three Stars" and took a demo to Crest Records in Hollywood. After hearing the splendid job Tommy did with this recording the Crest people promptly signed him as an artist. The following day he recorded "Three Stars" with Crest singers, Carol Kay and the Teen-Aires.

We're sure if they could, Buddy, Ritchie and the Bopper would give their heartfelt thanks to Tommy for being so concerned about their public and likewise if Tommy could, he would thank the trio for helping him to establish a recording career. Now Tommy is very busy with personal appearances, writing and recording ever since his record became almost overnight, one of the most widely requested and popular waxings in the music business.

## Tommy Dee Shines With 'Three Stars'

Virginia-born Tommy Dee grew up in Boston. A couple of years back he headed west with the dream of becoming an announcer and deejay. His first radio job was at KCLS in Flagstaff, Ariz., followed by a stint at KOFA in Yuma. He left Arizona to join the announcing staff at KFXM in San Bernardino, Calif.

During his first week at KFXM, the young artist wrote "Three Stars," and brought a demo to Crest Records. Crest signed him promptly, and several nights later he recorded the tune with Carol Kay and the Teen-Aires.

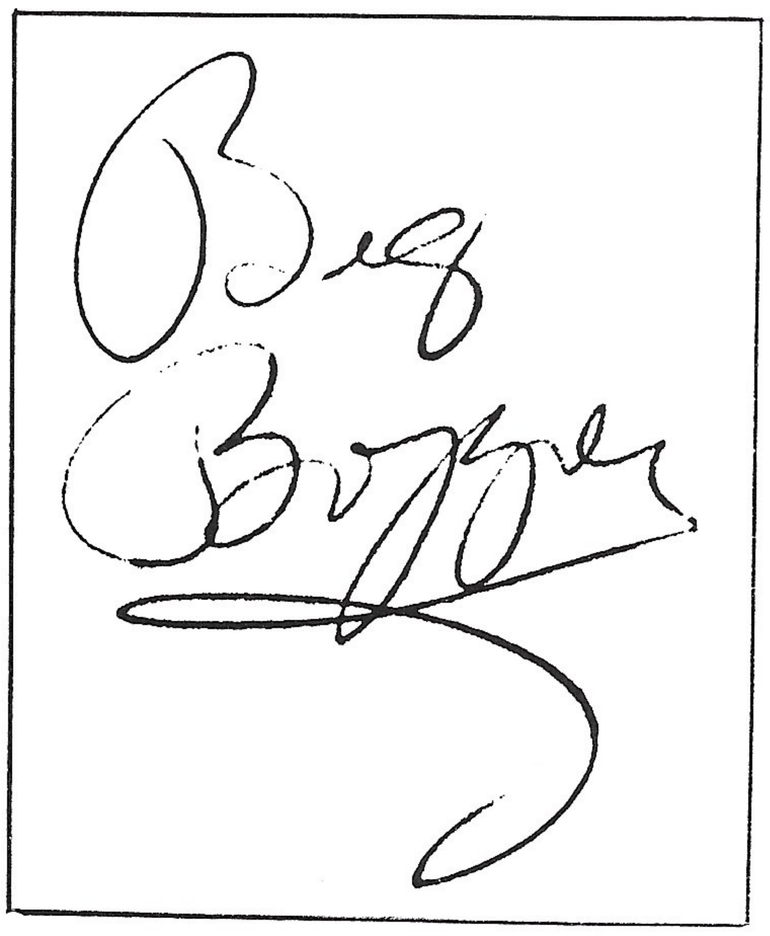
Dee stands six feet two inches, and has blue eyes and blond hair.

**THE BIG BOPPER**

★★★ **Pink Petticoats** — MERCURY 71472 —"Pink petticoats, ballerina shoes," chants the cat about his crazy chick. It's a rockin' eight-to-the-bar effort by the late chanter that's worth teen spins. (Glad, BMI)

★★★ **The Clock** — A slow and pounding love ballad that's given a stylish, deep-voiced reading by the Bopper. Has a strong r.&b tinge. Also worth plays. (Glad, BMI)

JULY 6, 1959



# The Man Behind The Name "Big Bopper"

The Big Bopper is the pseudonym of J.P. Richardson, an East Texas lad who, liek most of us, had a dream of happiness, success and security. This is his story.

J.P. Richardson was born in Sabine Pass, Texas on October 24th in 1932. He attended public schools in Beaumont, Texas, like most youngsters, and then upon graduating from high school he attended college, and worked part time as a radio disc jockey.

This was the first part of his dream coming true. Having been interested in music since a boy the opportunity to work at a radio station and attend college was the realization of his fantasy for happiness and success in the field of music.

J.P. Richardson was well known in the East Texas area as an entertainer because of his many appearances as a young man with the local Minstrel shows staged periodically, and was so widely accepted as a disc jockey that according to all surveys he was the number one Dee-Jay in the area. During this time he assumed the name Big Bopper and on this show played guitar and sang, with most of the listeners not knowing his identity, but it was the most popular show on radio station KTRM, in Beaumont, Texas.

The Big Bopper continued to succeed in radio and was named program director of the station, but he wanted to get closer to the top than that; so as a writer of songs he started placing his material with other artists, and soon was playing his own songs, sung by someone else, on his radio show. It was at this time he was offered a recording contract of his own, and he recorded and released four of his own compositions, as Jape Richardson on Mercury Records.

J.P.'s endeavors to succeed in the entertainment field was interrupted for two years while he spent this time in the Army as a Radar Instructor. On his release from service he re-entered radio and hit the top popularity list again by breaking the continuous broadcasting record, at the time, and rejoining radio station KTRM as a program director.

In June, 1958, J.P. wrote a song titled; "Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor," which was recorded by various artists; it was his desire to record it under the name of The Big Bopper. Arrangements were made for a recording session and for the other side of the release he submitted another of his own tunes, "Chantilly Lace." The rest is musical history; The Big Bopper has become a house-hold word and "Chantilly Lace" is one of the nation's top songs.

Now with his newest release of "Big Bopper's Wedding," backed with "Little Red Riding Hood," he's once again chart bound.

BIG BOPPER

# Johnny Preston

Even though The Big Bopper never had a number one single himself, One he did write went all the way to the top of the Charts.
In 1958, Johnny Preston was working with a group called The Shades in a club in Beaumont, Texas. One night he was visited by The Bopper and a Record Producer named Bill Hall. They were impressed with Preston and asked him if he wanted to cut a session for *Mercury Records*. He agreed and was soon in the studio to record a few tunes. Preston was just too nervous, Which was apparent on the tape, and so it was decided to drop the whole session.

This didn't stop The Bopper, He still had much faith in Johnny. So, not long after, Richardson got in touch with him again. He said that he had just the song for Johnny to record.

So, One sunday morning, Preston drove to a studio in Houston and was greeted by Richardson and Bill Hall. George Jones came along for the ride. J.P. then played a Demo of *"Running Bear"* which was the first time Johnny had ever heard it. The song was partly inspired by a Dove soap commercial on tv.

Preston was not to impressed with the tune, But Richardson assured him it had hit potential. Johnny wasn't sure of the song because it was nothing like the things they performed in the clubs.

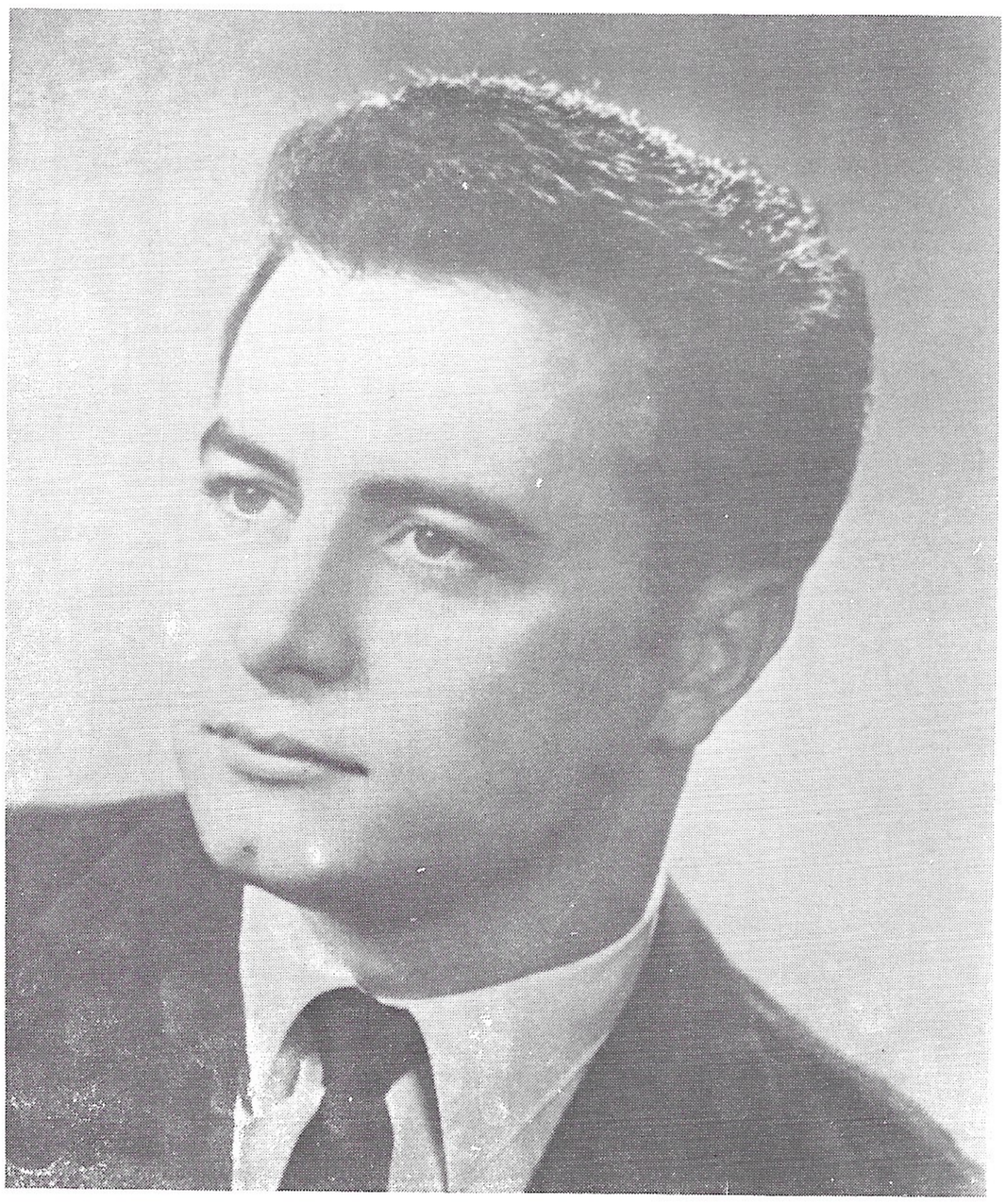
But Richardson insisted and Johnny did get through *"Running Bear"* after a few takes. The Indian chant in the background was provided by J.P., Bill Hall, George Jones and Pappy Daily. *"Running Bear"* Was about to be released when the world was shocked by the death of The Big Bopper, Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens. Mercury Records decided to hold back on the release of the single until months later. It finally hit the Charts in October of 1959,But quickly dropped off the Hot 100. It re-entered in November and shot all the way up to Number One. It stayed at the top of the Charts for 3 weeks.

**JOHNNY PRESTON**
**(Mercury 71474)**

**B+** "RUNNING BEAR" (2:33) [Big Bopper BMI — Richardson] Pop appeal in this Indian-theme outing by the country appeal. Tale has a "Romeo & Juliet"-type plot in that warring tribes keep two lovers apart, with resulting tragedy. Indian-like chants back the Preston reading.

**B** "MY HEART KNOWS" (2:22) [Big Bopper BMI — Richardson, Preston] Songster makes a touching case for the warm ballad.

JULY 4, 1959



**JOHNNY PRESTON**

**★★★ My Heart Knows** — MERCURY 71474 — Preston offers a heartache type romantic ballad, to a triplet backing. Tune has a catchy quality which could get it some spins. This side was co-cleffed by Preston with the late Bopper. (Big Bopper Music, BMI)

**★★★ Running Bear** — An Indian-type rocker written by the late J. P. (Big Bopper) Richardson. Side has an interesting quality which makes it worth spins. (Big Bopper, BMI)



JULY 6, 1959

## Preston's "Running Bear" Tops 1,000,000 Mark

CHICAGO—Sales of Johnny Preston's "Running Bear" single on Mercury reached one million last week, according to label singles chief Kenney Myers.

"Considering the fact that in many other areas it has yet to attain the coveted No. 1 spot," Myers said, "and there is tremendous sales mileage still to be covered, it is safe to say that 'Running Bear' has a potential of from a million-and-a-half to two million."

The song was written by the late J. P. ("Big Bopper") Richardson. With Bill Hall, Richardson was co-manager of Preston. The deck was cut in Dec., 1959 and Indian chant in the background was done by Richardson. About a month later, Richardson died in a plane crash that also took the lives of rock stars Ritchie Valens and Buddy Holly.

JANUARY 16, 1960

**Johnny Preston**
**Mercury Records'**
**"Mr. Running Bear"**

## POPULAR PICKS OF THE WEEK

"RUNNING BEAR"—Johnny Preston—Mercury SR 60250

The pop songster begins the set with a reading of his "Running Bear" single hit, and then proceeds through a bill of recent and past pop favorites. His versions are strictly in the teen-beat tradition and will no doubt embrace innumerable youngsters. Tunes include "Earth Angel," "Hearts Of Stone," "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Pretend."

JUNE 25, 1960

# TOP HIT-TER

"RUNNING BEAR"

MERCURY 71474

# JOHNNY PRESTON

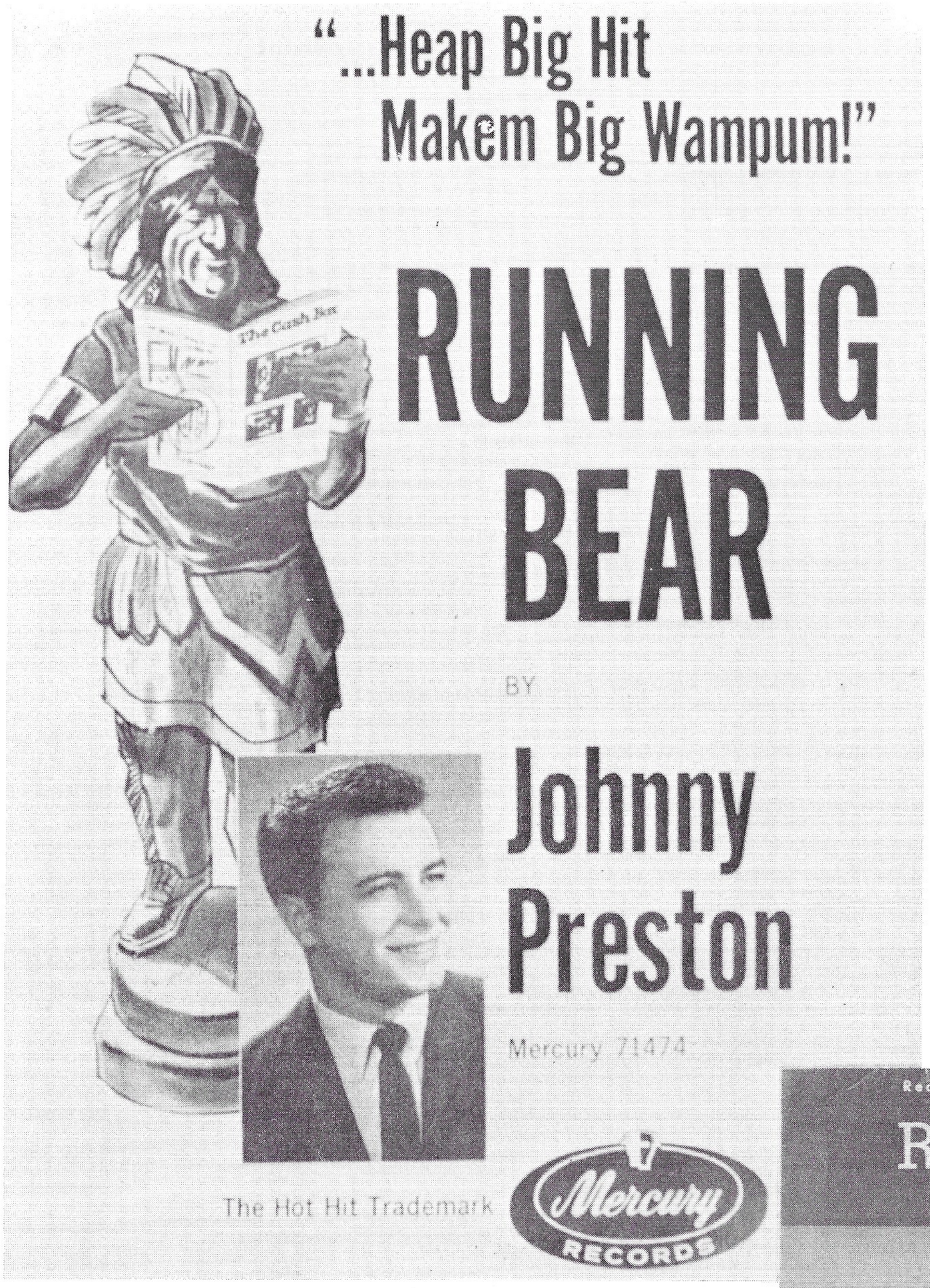
*Personal Management:*

**BILL HALL**

**2092 MAGNOLIA AVE., BEAUMONT, TEX.**

**(Phone: TErminal 2-1522; TErminal 2-2306)**

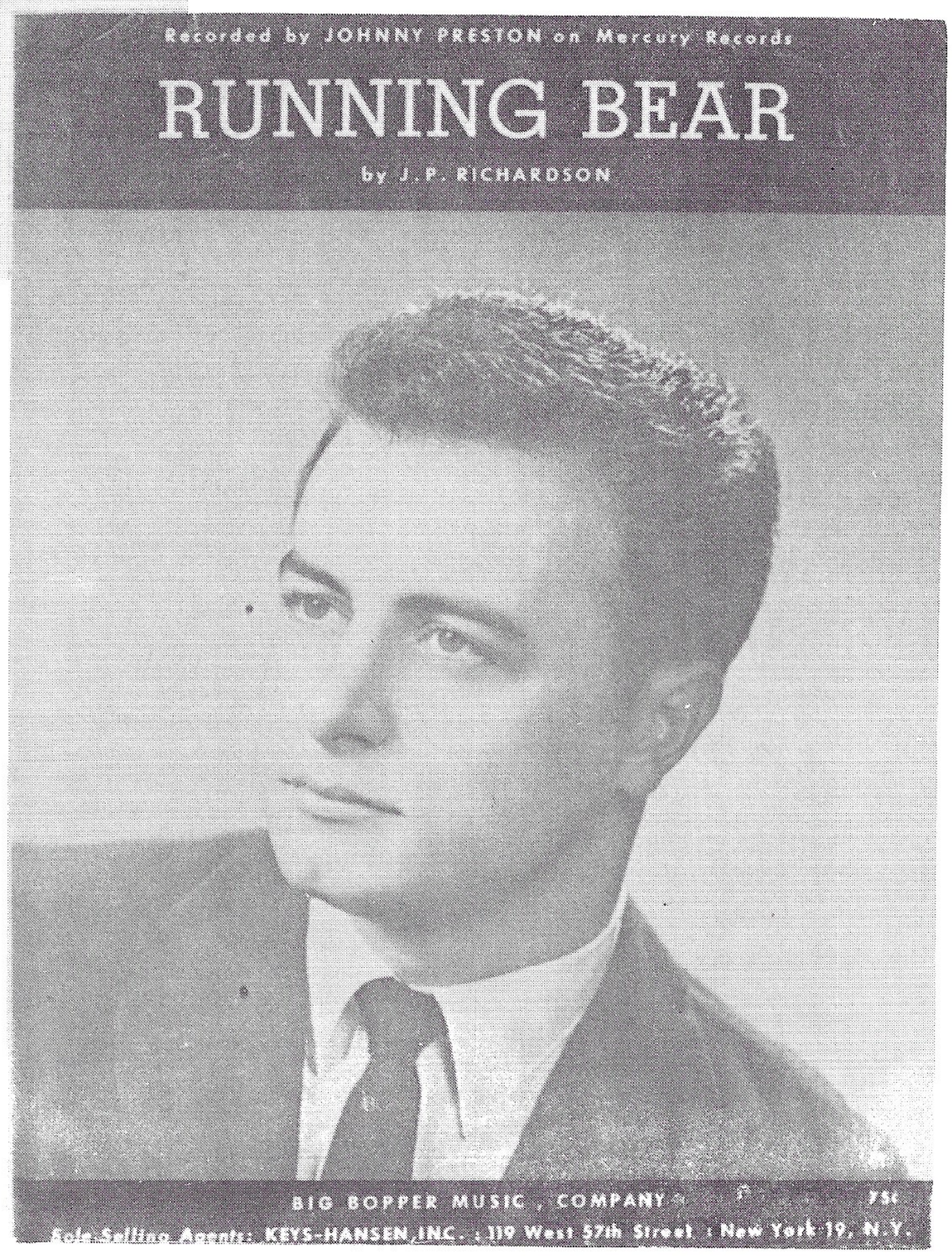
The Cash Box




## Johnny Preston

"Running Bear" is running right up there at the top spot on the pops charts. That's no surprise to us here at HIT PARADER, for this song was destined for the top. It's got some real catchy lyrics and it's set to a real bouncy tune. This song also has a story behind it. It was co-written by Johnny Preston who sings it and the late J. P. Richardson, the Big Bopper. In fact if it wasn't for the Big Bopper's untimely death most likely he would have recorded it himself. Johnny Preston was encouraged to make his first recording session by the Big Bopper and as it turned out Johnny was the one to record the song. Had the Big Bopper lived to record it Johnny Preston might not be a star today. Since Johnny, who has real talent, was helped along by the Big Bopper it was only fitting he record the song for his friend. It turned out to be quite a tribute for J. P. Richardson — a real hit.

Johnny had always been interested in becoming a recording star, and as we mentioned before he was encouraged to make his first recording session by the Big Bopper. Johnny's sure glad he did so because "Running Bear" is now one of the nation's favorite songs and Johnny Preston is one of the nation's favorite singers. He was recently voted one of the most promising new pop artists in the recent D. J. Poll conducted by Cashbox.


Recorded by JOHNNY PRESTON on Mercury Records
RUNNING BEAR
by J.P. RICHARDSON
BIG BOPPER MUSIC, COMPANY
75¢
Sole Selling Agents: KEYS-HANSEN, INC. : 119 West 57th Street : New York 19, N.Y.

✱ GEORGE JONES
WHITE LIGHTNING
71406

✱ D. WASHINGTON
WHAT A DIFFERENCE
A DAY MAKES
71435

✱ BIG BOPPER
IT'S THE TRUTH, RUTH
71451

Mercury® RECORDS


MAY 11, 1959

**Neville Smith** of Mercury Records reports excellent results following the TV showings of several telefilms featuring **Big Bopper, the Diamonds and the Platters** with their various hits. Mercury is the first label in Australia to run such telefilms to promote hits in both Sydney and Melbourne. Films have just been received of **Brook Benton** with "It's Just A Matter Of Time", **Mark IV** with "I Got A Wife" and an excerpt from the **Mike Nicholls-Elaine May** disk of "Improvisations To Music." This album is set for near-future release.

JUNE 13, 1959

DONNA DAMERON

HOUSTON—**Donna Dameron**, currently at the Maxwell House in Nashville, can now be heard on the Dart label doing "Bopper 486609," the sequal to the late **Big Bopper's** "Chantilly Lace." Chanter's untimely death caused label not to release deck, but, in fairness to Miss Dameron, Dart released the record.

OCTOBER 24, 1959

"FASTEST GUN ALIVE" (2:40)
[Big Bopper, Glad BMI—Richardson, Barnes]
"BEGGAR TO A KING" (2:19) [Big Bopper, Glad—BMI—Richardson]
BENNY BARNES (Mercury 71552)

● Barnes is a good bet to return to chart contention with the exciting job he turns in on "Fastest Gun Alive." Tune's a hesitation-beat western ballad about a gunslinger and the singer offers a convincing performance of it. "Beggar to a King" is a traditional waltz-weeper warmly cuddled.

DECEMBER 26, 1959

The late **J. P. (Big Bopper) Richardson,** killed last year in a plane crash, was author of three current Mercury singles, the fast-rising **Johnny Preston** hit, "Running Bear," **Rod Bernard's** "One More Chance," and **Benny Barnes'** "Fastest Gun Alive."

JANUARY 18, 1960


DART RECORDS

Glad Music
Big Bopper
Music
1206 - BMI

Vocal
Time 2:13

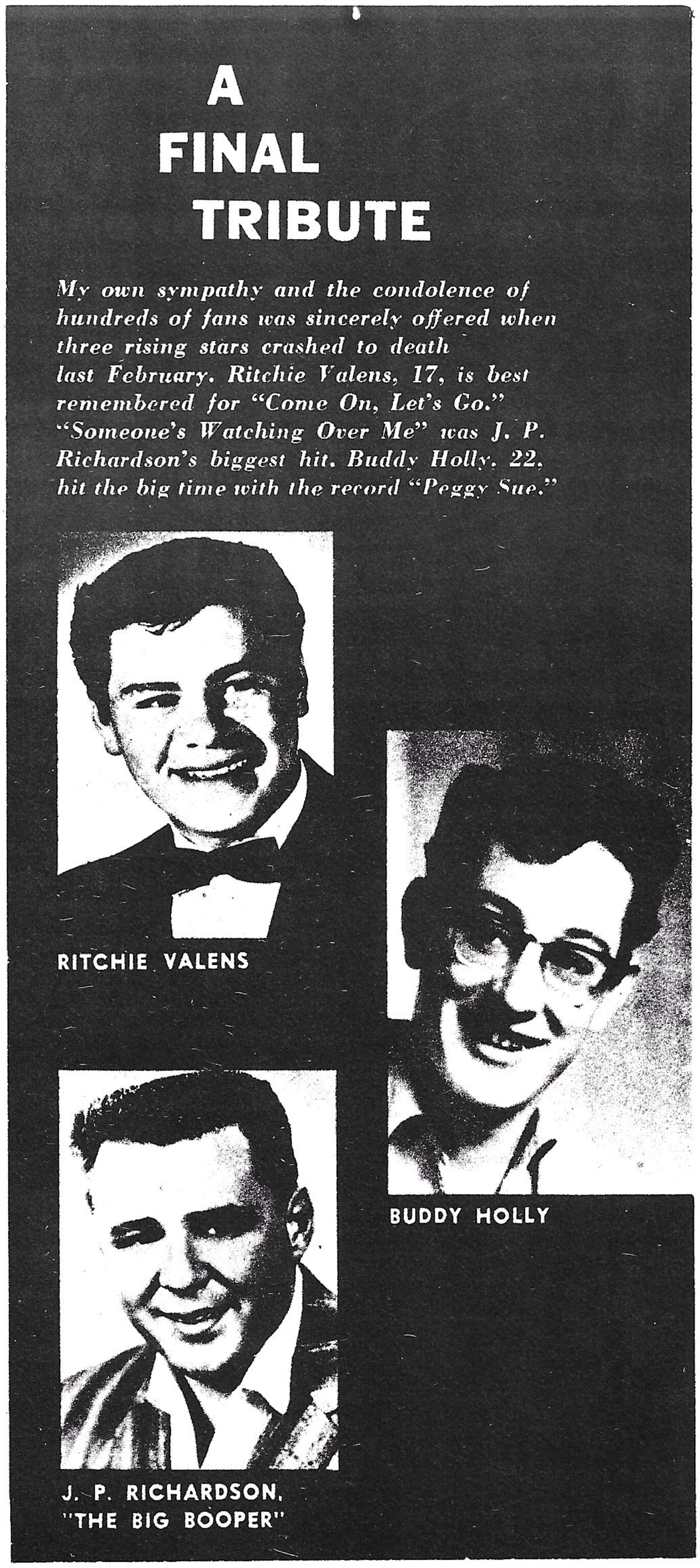
BOPPER 486609
(J. P. Richardson)

DONNA DAMERON
113

BIG BOPPER
Lives On
the "Chantilly Lace"
Ace also wrote '59 hits as
"Running Bear"
Johnny Preston (Mercury)
"White Lightning"
George Jones (Mercury)
"One More Chance"
Rod Bernard (Mercury)
"Treasure of Love"
George Jones (Mercury)
and more to come

Mercury® RECORDS


DECEMBER 14, 1959


A
FINAL
TRIBUTE
My own sympathy and the condolence of hundreds of fans was sincerely offered when three rising stars crashed to death last February. Ritchie Valens, 17, is best remembered for "Come On, Let's Go." "Someone's Watching Over Me" was J. P. Richardson's biggest hit. Buddy Holly, 22, hit the big time with the record "Peggy Sue."
RITCHIE VALENS
BUDDY HOLLY
J. P. RICHARDSON, "THE BIG BOOPER"

MOVIE STARS—MAY 1959

WIRL-Peoria, Ill. gave a tribute concert for **Ritchie Valens, The Big Bopper,** and **Buddy Holly.** All three were scheduled to appear on WIRL's Shower Of Stars concert benefit for the local Cerebral Palsy Association on Valentine's Day. In their stead were **Dion** and the **Belmonts, The Crickets,** plus three other top artists.

FEBRUARY 28, 1959

## J. P. RICHARDSON

For big, brawny Jape Richardson, known everywhere as The Big Bopper, life was just one big laugh after another. His teen age fans like to believe that he died just as he lived—laughing. He was the oldest of the tragic trio, 24 at the time of his death, and he showed maturity in his attitude toward life. He had learned to take it as it comes, live it, and enjoy it.

The Big Bopper, almost as wide as he was tall, made a habit of loud-striped suits and large-brimmed Texas hats. On the air, on the stage, even on his records, his chuckles were as much a part of his personality as his voice and the twang of his guitar. He loved crazy jokes and crazy talk. He especially went for *cuh-rra-zzy* coats, all of which he gave special names.

A favorite for TV appearances was a three-quartered job of leopard skin, which he fondly called, "Melvin." An outdoor coat, wildly striped in zebra pattern was named "Igor." And a knee-length jacket of tiger-skin plush was, he insisted, a girl, and so he named it, "Zelda."

J. P. Richardson began his entertainment career when he was in college. He sang and played local dances and parties to help himself through law school. Without a moment's hesitation, he accepted a bid to become a disc jockey at station KTRM in Beaumont, Texas. Soon he spun and funned his way into the hearts of thousands of people in east Texas, and had the highest listener ratings of any DJ in that area.

It wasn't long before The Bopper had decided that it would be more profitable to cut records than to spin them. Besides, Rock 'n Roll was *the* music, and J. P. dug it. His first four discs were released under the Mercury banner, billing him as J. P. Richardson.

Then came the record that made history: "Purple People Eater Meets Witch Doctor" was intended as the big side, but there was a little composition by the Bopper, entitled, "Chantilly Lace" on the flip side. Cutting "Chantilly," Jape stepped up to the mike and growled in his deep voice, "Hello, Baby. This is the Big Bopper!" The magic words to millions of teen agers!

TEEN SCREEN—OCTOBER 1960

**BIG BOPPER** (Mercury)

**BIRTHDAY:** 1932. Killed in plane crash February 3, 1959. **HOME TOWN:** Beaumont, Tex. **BACKGROUND:** Worked as Southeast Texas deejay for 8 years until he wrote and recorded his first big hit, "Chantilly Lace," last year. A son, Jay Perry Richardson, was born to his widow, Adriane Joy, April 28, 1959. **REAL NAME:** J. P. Richardson.

**LATEST SINGLE:** Walking Through My Dreams b/w Someone Watching Over You.
**LATEST ALBUM:** Chantilly Lace.

MAY 25, 1959

"D" stands for "Daily" and "Daily" stands for all that is good and fine in our world of music, particularly Country music.

"Pappy" Daily, D Records prexy is sort of an institution in music circles, and his friends and associates literally swear by the genial and affable Mr. Daily. He has put a lot of sweat, tears, and smiles toward the furtherence of music and music-makers between the pages of his life story.

Many artists, currently popular and also comparatively unknown, owe much of their success and peace of mind to the sincere and constant endeavor of the Texan from Houston. There's Webb Pierce, one of Decca Records' greatest; George Jones, of "Life To Go" fame; Bennie Barnes who is out with a popular D release "Gold Records In The Snow"; James O'Quinn and Eddie Noack; Hank Locklin of RCA Victor, and of course the great and ever shining star that now hangs permanently in the skies of his eternal home—The Big Bopper.

It was Pappy Daily who extended the strong helping hand to these artists when they needed warm, encouraging words and practical help. It was Pappy who told them they had talent, and they were not to give up, and it was Pappy who gave them the push they needed to keep traveling on the tricky road to stardom.

"D" stands for "Daily," and "Daily" the unique talent of J. P. "Jape" Richardson, and guided him to fame as "The Big Bopper". The mutual friendship and reciprocal loyalty of these two was apparent to all who knew them right up to the time of the premature death of The Big Bopper on an icy field in Iowa. The tears in the heart of Pappy Daily are still there, but he goes on helping others just as Jape would have wanted him to.

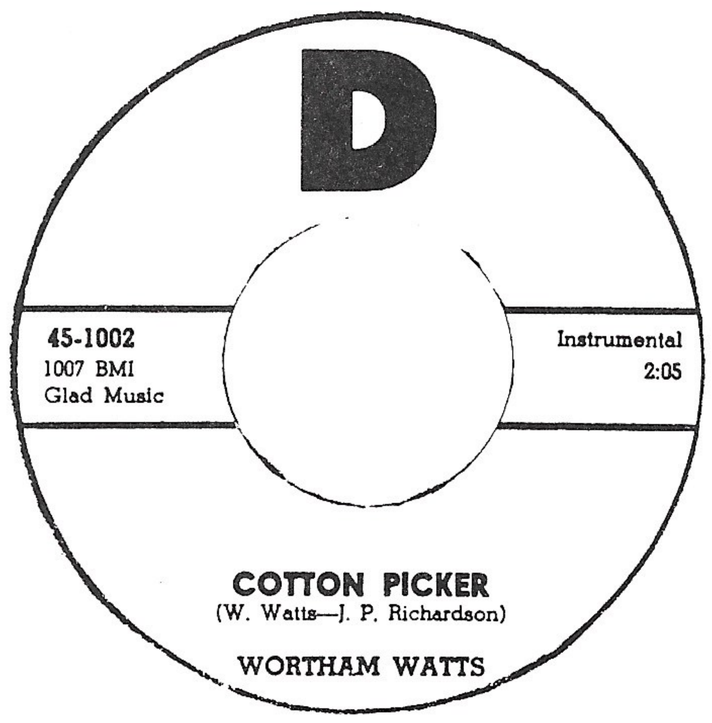
Pappy Daily has a well-known sidekick in the promotion of his plans for D Records and Dee Music—Mr. Gabe Tucker. Gabe has talked to me about Pappy and how happy he is to be associated with him. He was solemn and intent as he said "Mae, I am so grateful to be affiliated with such a great man —one who has done so much for Country music." And then he said, "Pappy loves this business—just like the colonel" (and he pointed with pride to a handsomely tailored Western suit that the colonel—Col. Tom Parker—had given him.)

Yes, Pappy Daily is a sort of institution in music circles, especially Country music—and Country music can be mighty proud of him and be inspired to work just a little bit harder to bring more of his kind into the inner circle of the magic of Country Music.

Around 1958, Harold W. Daily, known to his friends as 'Pappy,' started a new label called 'D' Records. It was located in Houston, Texas.

J. P. booked some recording time and came to the session with two songs. The backing group consisted of Eddie Novak on guitar, Link Davis on saxophone, Hal Harris and Bobby Mizzell on piano. They cut a novelty tune J. P. had written called *"Purple People Eater Meets Witch Doctor,"* which was the A side. The other tune was a song entitled *"Chantilly Lace."* It has been rumored that it was origun
It has been rumored that it was originally entitled *"That's What I Like,"* but that 'Pappy' Daily suggested it be changed to *"Chantilly Lace."* Daily had been stated as saying he liked *"Chantilly Lace"* much more than the other cut.

The record was released on the 'D' label where it sold fairly well. It was then picked up by Mercury records and went on to become a smash hit.




Also released on the 'D' label was an instrumental called *"Cotton Picker"* backed with *"Lonesome"* by Wortham Watts. Both of these tunes were co-written by J. P. Richardson.

# DION

## DION'S FATHER REMEMBERS

"I remember the time, for example, that Ritchie Valens and the others were killed. Dion was supposed to get on that plane with Buddy Holly and Valens and J.P. Richardson. But, for some reason, he took the bus. Anyway, the reporters were after Dion to talk about it and he thought it was wrong. Dion was miserable about the accident and felt offended that they wanted him to make hay out of such a tragedy. He practically pitched the reporters out of his hotel room. He thought it was all in bad taste, and stood up for his opinion. That was another time when I saw that he had real backbone."

Fran DiMucci, Dion's very attractive mother, adds, "Dion felt so close to those boys. He had a brotherly feeling for Ritchie and Buddy. Dion cried, off and on, about their being killed. Dion can cry, but it doesn't mean he isn't a man. He still sits around some evenings and talks about them."

TV RADIO MIRROR
SEPTEMBER 1959

## TV MOVIE & RECORD STARS

Dion has another guitar that means a good deal to him. It belonged to The Big Bopper, and when that singer was killed last year in a plane crash, his widow gave it to Dion who had been a good friend. He treasures this memento highly.

Because of Dion's sensitiveness and his sometimes serious outlook on life, the crash in which The Big Bopper died was a great personal tragedy to him. Not just because The Bopper was a friend. Buddy Holly and Richie Valens—both big rock 'n roll stars—lost their lives in the same accident.

It seems ironic to Dion that all of them, so young and so talented, should have had to die at the same time. It makes him stop and think of the danger in showbusiness when so much time is spent traveling from one city to another. But he'd never leave showbusiness—ever.

FEBRUARY 1960

# A Tribute To The BIG BOPPER

Many people spend a long time on this old planet, and when they depart it, leave not a single enjoyable trace of their having been here. Not so with the Big Bopper — his was a short life, but he lived it loud, laughing and loving it. Husky Jape Richardson of Beaumont, Texas, was 24 years old when he died in a February 3rd plane crash, along with two other nationally Rock 'n Roll stars. Buddy Holly, twenty-two years old, was from Lubbock, Texas; Ritchie Valens, 17, was a Californian.

Just what strange scheduling in Fate's office booked these three young men from warm and sunny homes to play a last stand together over a bleak and snow-swept cornfield in Iowa is hard to understand. On a dance-party tour of one-nighters, these three decided to charter a plane to Fargo, N. Dakota, and let the rest of the troupe follow by bus. According to the scientists, sound is not sound unless there are nearby ear-drums for it to vibrate against. There were no witnesses who saw the chartered Bonanza's plunge through the silent snow, no one within ear-range of the ripping wings and smashing metal. It seems fitting, somehow, that the last sound left behind them by the three young recording artists was music, applause, and the tapping feet of 1,100 teenagers, still echoing from the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa.

The Big Bopper, almost as wide as he was tall, made a habit of loud-striped suits and large-brimmed Texas hats. On the air, on the stage, even on his records, his chuckles were as much a part of his personality as his voice and the twang of his guitar. He loved crazy jokes, and crazy lingo. He especially went for crr-azzy coats, to all of which he gave names. A favorite for TV appearances was a three-quartered deal of simulated leopard-skin, fondly spoken of and to as "Melvin." An outdoor coat, wildly striped in zebra pattern, was "Igor." A knee-length jacket of tiger plush was, he insisted, a girl and therefore named "Zelda."

J. P. Richardson began his entertainment career when he was in college, and Bop was the current beat. He played dances and local minstrel shows until, to help finance an education in law, he became a part-time disc-jockey at KTRM, Beaumont, Texas. In a short time he had spun and funned his way into the daily existence of all of East Texas, and become the highest rated deejay in that area.

Military service interrupted for two years while he served in the Army as a radar instructor. He returned to civilian life with a Stetson-ful of ambitions, all of them directed to getting ahead in show-business circles. As for his early ambition to be a legal-eagle, it was fine to help people settle their troubles, but more fun making them forget 'em. His popularity and production ideas earned him a promotion to Program Director of KTRM. He made national newspaper and telecast space by subjecting himself to an endurance test, setting a high-mark of more than 122 hours of non-stop broadcasting.

Meantime, the fun-type music which was so much a part of his make-up kept Jape putting song-ideas down on paper, which at first he sold to other artists for recording, and then aired on his shows. A more satisfactory arrangement would be waxing his own songs — which Mercury Records soon gave him opportunity to do.

Rock 'n Roll was by this time a national St. Vitus, and the husky Texas deejay was gleefully in the groove. His first four discs were released with Mercury billing him as Jape Richardson. Then came the record that made history: "Purple People Eater Meets Witch Doctor" was designed as the plug side, with another little composition called "Chantilly Lace" on the flip. It was while discing "Chantilly" that Jape stepped up to the mike and said, "Hello, Baby — this is the Big Bopper!" Mercury's A & R Director, Art Talmadge, sent it out under the Big Bopper title and "Chantilly Lace" climbed to a top place on all the lists. With less than eight months as a platter pro, he already had won a coveted gold record.

Like Holly and Valens, the Big Bopper was at his peak — between the three of them, they had sold millions of records. Just ten days before leaving on the dance-party tour, the Bopper waxed another of his own compositions, "Walking Through My Dreams." As backing for this single, Mercury has used one of the few numbers he had ever done in serious vein, "Someone Watching Over Me." This, with a "remembrance" album of all The Big Bopper's recordings, are going to be treasured for a long, long time by his fans!

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LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
PREACHER AND THE BEAR
IT'S THE TRUTH, RUTH
WHITE LIGHTNING

The Big Bopper
Chantilly Lace

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STAR
BOOGIE WOOGIE
CRAZY BLUES
IT'S THE TRUTH, RUTH
MONKEY SONG
TEENAGE MOON
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BOPPER 486609
WALKING THROUGH MY DREAMS
THE MAN I MET
THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT
PURPLE PEOPLE EATER MEETS
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'Oh, baby that's what I like!'
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D RECORDS

1008 PURPLE PEOPLE EATER MEETS WITCH DOCTOR/CHANTILLY LACE

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71343 CHANTILLY LACE/PURPLE PEOPLE EATER MEETS WITCH DOCTOR
71375 BIG BOPPER'S WEDDING/LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
71416 SOMEONE WATCHING OVER YOU/WALKING THROUGH MY DREAMS
71451 IT'S THE TRUTH RUTH/THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT
71482 PINK PETTICOATS/THE CLOCK

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17,000 CHANTILLY LACE/SOMEONE WATCHING OVER YOU

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LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, BIG BOPPER'S WEDDING
PURPLE PEOPLE EATER MEETS WITCH DOCTOR/CHANTILLY LACE

60,144 CHANTILLY LACE—BIG BOPPER (SWEDEN)
CHANTILLY LACE/PURPLE PEOPLE EATER MEETS WITCH DOCTOR
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD/BIG BOPPER'S WEDDING

104 CHANTILLY LACE—STARRING THE BIG BOPPER (AUSTRALIA)
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3185 COUNTRY HITS—VOL. 2 (VARIOUS ARTISTS) (U.S.)
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CONTOUR RECORDS

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CHANTILLY LACE/PINK PETTICOATS/LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD/ SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER YOU/BIG BOPPER'S WEDDING/OLD MAID/ IT'S THE TRUTH RUTH/PREACHER AND THE BEAR/THE CLOCK/WHITE WHITE LIGHTNING

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# Holly, Valens & Bopper Recalled On 5th Anniversary of Deaths

Five years ago Monday, Feb. 3, 1959, three of the fastest-rising stars in the recording industry were killed in a plane crash in Iowa, while en-route to a concert in Fargo, North Dakota. But although their careers were nipped out even before they had a chance to blossom, the memory and recordings of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J. P. "Big Bopper" Richardson have survived these five short years, and, if anything, have grown.

In the trade, Buddy Holly was that "wild and frantic rockabilly with the Tex-Mex border sound." Others put it more simply, "Holly was a great cat." This was the modest, quiet fellow who once said, "Let's face it, without Elvis Presley, none of us could have made it." He was an innovator. Having originally come into the music world as a country and western singer, he found little success in Nashville and returned disappointed to his native Texas. However, his youth and good spirits stood him in good stead. He recruited talented friends Jerry Allison, Nick Sullivan and Joe Mauldin and formed The Crickets. The group decided that rock 'n' roll was more profitable than c&w, but actually combined the two into a new and immediately successful musical form and christened it "rockabilly." More sophisticated and rhythmic than country or western music, quieter and more melodious than the rock of the era, the new style was bound to go over, and it did.

Buddy was born in Lubbock, Texas in 1936. He began to study piano and violin at an early age, but by high school he had switched to and gained great proficiency on the guitar. Buddy formed a duo with a friend and performed at school assemblies, contests and eventually over station KDAC. At this point he decided to make singing his career and stuck to that decision in spite of his Nashville disappointment. His first break came from Norman Petty, who recorded. and Murray Deutch, who sold to Coral Records a Holly-penned song, "That'll Be The Day." From there his career was launched.

One success after another followed: "Peggy Sue," "Early In The Morning," "Oh Boy," "Maybe Baby" among them. But fate was to grant him four brief years of stardom, for at the age of 23 tragedy came. Buddy can still be heard on six Decca and Coral LPs, plus numerous singles, all which have, over the years, proved among the most popular in the c&w catalog.

The career of Ritchie Valens was of even shorter duration, but his future was no less promising. Born in Pacomia, Calif., a Los Angeles suburb, in May, 1941. At the age of nine he gained possession of a Spanish guitar, from which he soon became inseparable. At 12, he delighted his classmates and audiences with his proficiency, singing songs he made up as he strummed. Some of them were derived from the old Mexican-Indian folk melodies his relatives sang.

In high school Ritchie organized a musical-vocal group, The Silhouettes, which entertained at school events and private parties. He was soon discovered by Bob Keene, Prexy of Del Fi Records, who promptly recorded the now legendary Valens voice. Ritchie's first record, "Come On, Let's Go" (which he wrote) and an oldie, "Framed," was released first on the West Coast but soon broke nationally. The promotion tour which followed spread his fame nationwide.

One night after returning home to Califorina, Ritchie called Keene and told him that he had written a song for his girlfriend, Donna Ludwig, and when he had sung it for her over the telephone she had cried. Keene heard the song and it was recorded for immediate release. "Donna," backed with his own arrangement of "La Bamba," sold a quarter of a million copies in a month. A Christmas tour of the East with TV and concert appearances followed, plus a short segment in the film "Go, Johnny, Go," in which he sang two songs. Toward the end of January, 1959, he embarked on a 23-day mid-west tour, which was to precede European appearances. But all this was cut short in that Iowa cornfield on the night of Feb. 3.

Ritchie can still be heard on five Del Fi albums, containing everything he ever recorded. One of them, "In Concert At Pacomia Jr. High," is a live session taped clandestinely on a home recorder, the only recording ever made of him "in person."

J. P. Richardson, the Big Bopper, had three "at bats" in the game of show business. Richardson was born in October, 1932 in Sabine Pass, Texas. He attended public schools in Beaumont, Texas and worked part time as a disk jockey while attending college. This work prompted him into thinking about a full-time career in show business. In addition he made a great many appearances in local talent shows, where he created the character of the Big Bopper.

Fame of the BB's personality spread to a point where he became the disk jockey of the most popular show on KTRM-Beaumont. Upon his promotion to PD of the outlet Richardson found more time for songwriting. He sent home demonstration records to veteran c&w producer, Harold "Pappy" Daily, who at that time operated Mercury-Starday Records. Pappy so liked the tunes which "Jape" himself sang that he hired him both as a songwriter and recording artist. He made two c&w records for Mercury, which were released under the name of Jape Richardson.

Richardson, already a veteran in show business, saw rock 'n' roll getting stronger as c&w grew weaker. As a result he cut some audition disks as the Big Bopper, which he sent to Daily. The first of them, "Chantilly Lace," shot to the top as a national best-seller. His Mercury album, containing 12 self-penned songs, is illustrative of a rare artist who could weld together great amounts of excellent material: "Chantilly Lace," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Big Bopper's Wedding" and "White Lightning." Had he lived the world could undoubtedly have expected many more gems, as is the case with Ritchie Valens and Buddy Holly.

**Chantilly Lace**
**BIG BOPPER**
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# Buddy Holly Memorial Society

The Buddy Holly Memorial Society (BHMS) is licensed by the Holly estate and has members in all 50 States as well as the following foreign countries; Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, England, Finland, France, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, North Yemen, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Wales, West German, and Zimbabwe. Although the BHMS previously had published their official journal "Reminiscing" , that has ceased, and the only fee required to become a member is the one-time fee described below. The BHMS is in its 13th year of continuous operation.

### THE ONE TIME FEE TO BECOME A BHMS MEMBER IS:

United States & Canada (sent 1st class) - **$12.00** Europe & South American (sent airmail) - **$15.00**
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The new member's fee includes registering you as a BHMS member for life, plus you'll receive all of the following: A numbered and dated certificate; a Buddy Holly "quick fact" sheet, a 1980 Buddy Holly tribute concert program with many pictures of Buddy Holly including a nice 5x7 color picture on the cover; a special set of nine BHMS postcards, each having a different picture of Buddy Holly; and the limited edition 52 page magazine produced in 1986 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the BHMS (see listing and description of this on inside back cover), and more. As the publishing of "Reminiscing" has ceased and all previous subscribers had been switched over to "ROCKIN' 50's", the only way you can stay in touch with news about Buddy Holly, the Crickets, and other Clovis related artists, is by subscribing to "ROCKIN' 50's which is detailed below. Periodic lists of records and other items for sale from Bill Griggs are always enclosed free with each subscriber's issue when it is mailed. Very special items, such as authentic autographs, are listed at auction on my lists when they are available. Back issues of "Reminiscing" are still available at this time.

All payments sent to become a BHMS member or to subscribe to the ROCKIN' 50's must be in U.S. funds, drawn on a U.S. bank. Personal checks are accepted only from those living in the United States and they must clear the bank first.
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(You'll receive issues 13-18 published from August 1988 to June 1989)

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